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On Organization V.I. Lenin

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V.I. Lenin

ON ORGANIZATION

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LENIN ON ORGANIZATION

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San Francisco, CA 94140

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INTRODUCTION.

Lenin on the Formation of the Bolshevik Party.

No one now questions the truth that the Russian proletariat in alliance with the peasantry was able to emerge victorious from the struggle with the bourgeoisie and the landlords, to hold out against intervention and blockade, against unparalleled economic ruin, famine and cold, and to set to work to restore the economic life of Russia only because it was led by an excellent, monolithic, Bolshevik Party, closely welded with the masses. The great founder of this party was V. I. Lenin. Consequently every section of the Communist International must learn how this party was formed and what organizational principles were introduced by V. I. Lenin in its formation. Towards this end the Organisation Department of the Executive Committee of the Communist International is striving to bring to the knowledge of all the sections of the Communist International V. I. Lenin's fundamental ideas on the question of organization.

Of course the Russian Communist Party did not become what we see it now all in one day. It developed in the struggle and in this book we will endeavor, by means of extracts from the articles and other works of Lenin, to make our comrades acquainted with this struggle.

The Conditions Under Which the Bolshevik Party was Formed.

The proletarian party in Russia was formed under conditions which differed from those in which the proletarian parties in the Western countries were formed. In the West the Socialist Parties were formed under legal conditions, when legal labor organizations (trade unions, etc.), bourgeois parliaments and a minimum at least of liberty for the labor movement existed; in Russia, however, the proletarian party was formed prior to the bourgeois democratic revolution, under the severest absolutism, the absence of all liberties, but amidst an existing mass labor movement.

The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was formed in 1898.

Up to the '90's, owing to the backwardness of Russia, the Social Democratic movement was maintained principally by intellectuals. Although the workers took part in the movement, they did not yet have their vanguard in the form of a revolutionary labor party and the importance of the developing labor movement was not sufficiently appreciated by the revolutionary intellectuals. Among the most progressive section of the intellectuals predominated the ideas of the so-called Narodniki (Populists) who denied that capitalism was developing in Russia and who argued that Russia would progress towards Socialism by other and less painful paths than will the West, i. e., not through capitalism and large-scale machine production, but through the peasant commune. Hence, in the '90s,

when Marxism began to beat a path for itself in Russia, bourgeois intellectuals, totally alien to the spirit of revolutionary Marxism, began to adopt Marxism in order to disperse the petty-bourgeois Narodniki's conception of the progress of the revolutionary movement in Russia and to prove that Russia must inevitably pass through the stage of capitalist production. This gave rise to the so-called "legal Marxism". Meanwhile, the best Social Democrats were being systematically plucked out of the ranks of the Social Democratic organizations by the Czarist gendarmerie. The intellectuals had managed to permeate the labor movement, to reduce it to a mere trade union movement (economism) and to convert it into an auxiliary weapon in the struggle of the liberal bourgeoisie. The revolutionary Social Democrats were therefore obliged to take up the fight against the intellectuals. The Social Democrats aimed so to train cadres of experienced professional revolutionaries who were to devote their lives entirely to party work, to give them a definite Marxian program and definite tactics, and finally to gather these cadres into a united militant party sufficiently secret to be able to evade the raids of the gendarmerie, but at the same time having sufficient contact with the masses to be able to lead them into the battle at the required moment.

V. I. Lenin clearly saw these tasks as early as the end of the '90's and the beginning of the 20th century, and consistently advocated them in "Iskra", the organ of the Russian revolutionary Social De-

mocracy. (Between 1900 and 1903 "Iskra" [the Spark], which later became known as the "old Iskra," expressed the revolutionary policy of the left wing of Social Democracy, whereas after 1903 "Iskra" was conducted by the Mensheviks.) At about this time Comrade Lenin's remarkable pamphlet "What is to be Done?" (1902) appeared, which played a notable part in the history of the construction and development of the Russian Communist Party. In this pamphlet Comrade Lenin delivered crushing blows to the opportunistic tendency in the Russian Social Democracy—the so-called economists, who appeared in the middle of the '90's. The "economists," who were kindred to the "legal Marxists," were typical opportunists, akin to the West European revisionists. They gave way to the spontaneity of the labor movement and actually reduced it to mere trade unionism. They denied the necessity for a centralized Social Democratic Party and argued that organizations for the protection of the economic interests of the workers (benefit societies, strike funds, etc.) were sufficient. In "Iskra" and the pamphlet "What is to be Done?" Lenin was the first to give a profoundly reasoned argument in favor of the plan of organization of so-called "professional revolutionaries" which he had put forward already in 1901. We reproduce several chapters of this pamphlet devoted to the question of organization in the present book.

The organizational forms which the Social Democratic organizations in Russia assumed at that time can be seen from Lenin's "Letter to a Com-

rade" (September 1902) which served as the basis of the organization of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. At the head of the local organization was a committee to which were subordinated the district groups and circles. Some of these, after confirmation by the committee, joined the party. Others were regarded merely as associates. Later on, in large towns, district committees sprang up. According to the rules adopted at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (1903), only the committees, as actual organizations of "professional revolutionaries," had the right to send representatives to Party Congresses, in addition to the Central Committee of the Party and the editorial board of the central organ. The latter played a predominant part in the formation of the Social Democratic Party in Russia: it was "not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also a collective organizer." (Lenin, 1901, in "Iskra," No. 4).

The Split Between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.

Prior to the Second Congress of the Party, Martov and Paul Axelrod worked together with Lenin. At the end of the '90's in an introduction to Lenin's pamphlet, "The Tasks of Russian Social Democrats," Axelrod wrote that "Lenin happily combined in himself the experience of a good practician with theoretical training and a wide political outlook." At the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1903, however, they parted company. The differences arose principally over ques-

tions of organization, to which, already at that time, Comrade Lenin attached enormous and even decisive importance.

The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party at that time was only in the process of formation and it was particularly important to determine on what basis it was being formed. Martov, P. Axelrod and several other old "Iskra-ists" were carried away by the tide of petty-bourgeois influence and desired to form the Party on a wide basis: **They proposed that even those who did not directly belong to any branch of the party, but merely helped the party, be regarded as party members.** By this they opened wide the doors to the near-the-Party petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who shrank from Party discipline and active revolutionary struggle. They were of the opinion that every man that went on strike could declare himself a Party member. They subordinated the element of consciousness in the proletarian struggle to the element of spontaneity. **This explains the fact that the Mensheviks always dragged at the tail of the movement and did not lead it.** Holding this point of view the Mensheviks were quite consistent when, in 1908-1909, the period of black reaction which followed the revolution of 1905, they advocated the liquidation of the illegal party and the formation as a substitute for it of an amorphous body "at all costs working within the bounds of legality."

At the Second Congress Lenin said: "The Party must be really the vanguard, the leader of the enormous masses of the working class, the whole of

which (or almost the whole) works under the control and guidance of the Party organization, but which does not as a whole belong to the Party." This imposes still greater demands upon Party members: **Only those who directly belong to one of the Party organizations and work in it actively can be regarded as Party members.** In this manner Lenin laid a firm foundation to the Party of "professional revolutionaries" and rendered difficult the penetration of petty-bourgeois elements. Thanks to this the Bolshevik Party was saved from being swamped by petty-bourgeois intellectuals, as was the fate of the Mensheviks, and was helped to remain true to its program and tactics in the most difficult years of the reaction.

After the Second Congress the Mensheviks revealed similar opportunism on the questions of centralism, local autonomy for branches and democracy. The Bolsheviks advocated **centralism,** the absolute subordination of the local organizations to the leading centre, the appointment of committeemen, and cooption (while the reaction raged). On these questions the Mensheviks followed the economists. They were opposed to the absolute subordination of local organization to the leading center, they were opposed to strict Party discipline and in favor of wide autonomy for local organization. In spite of the weakness of the local organization, in spite of the raging Czarist reaction, and the strict secrecy in which the Party organizations had to be maintained, the Mensheviks insisted upon dem-

ocracy in the Party, the unconditional election of local committees and strongly opposed "appointment" (the cooption of committeemen). They howled about the autocracy and bureaucracy of the Bolsheviks, about "blind submission" and ridiculed Party discipline. Lenin had already exposed the opportunism of the Mensheviks on these questions in 1904, in his pamphlet "One Step Forward, Two Backward" and showed how closely their views were related to the views on these questions of the opportunistic wing of the Social Democracy in all countries (the reformists).

Thus, at the Second Congress, the Mensheviks, on the question of organization, proved to be the opportunists in the ranks of the Social Democracy. By uniting with the ex-economists, soon after the Second Congress, they became finally submerged in the quagmire of opportunism.

Lenin's pamphlet "One Step Forward, Two Backwards", (written in 1904) gives an analysis of the decisions of the Second Congress, and of the conduct of the Mensheviks after the Congress. Several chapters of this pamphlet are included in the present work describing the fundamental differences between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks on the question of organization.

The Organization of Factory Nuclei.

All the time Lenin did not for a moment lose sight of the fundamental idea expressed by him in 1902 in his "Letter to a Comrade," viz., that only by maintaining the closest contact with the masses of the

workers will the Party be able to lead them into the battle at the necessary moment. Already in 1902 he recommended that "factory circles" be formed in the various enterprises, which later on became the factory nuclei. **"Every factory must be our fortress"**—he wrote, and returned again and again to this question.

However, it was not possible at one stroke to make the factory nuclei the basis of the Party organization even in the Bolshevik Party. In 1907, in an article entitled "The Petersburg Split" Lenin wrote as follows concerning the then existing Petersburg organization:

"We see that in St. Petersburg (and probably in a majority of towns in Russia), district, sub-district, and subordinate nuclei are formed not only on territorial (local) lines, but also on industrial and on national lines. For example, in St. Petersburg there is a railway district; it is organized on the industrial basis. Also there are Lettish and Esthonian district and military organizations."

Thus we had various forms of subordinate Party organization which were preserved right up to 1917. This shows how difficult it is to overcome old organizational forms. It was decided to liquidate the special Party organizations of the railwaymen, postal workers, and the military only at the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (March 1919). It must be admitted that these organizations, in their time, played an extremely important role in the effort to spread the influence of

the Bolshevik Party among the respective categories of workers.

But the Bolshevik Party always concentrated its attention on the work in the factories, and on establishing nuclei in them. Already in the period of the 1905 revolution and after, the Party Committee knew precisely how many workers there were employed at a particular factory, what were their conditions, and how many members of the Bolshevik Party, the Menshevik Party, and Social Democrats, and the sympathisers with the respective Parties there were in the factory. It was in the factories that the Bolsheviks conducted their work principally. There they led the strikes and all the conflicts of the workers with the employers (mass trade unions arose in Russia only at the time of the 1905 revolution). This gave the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party the opportunity to take the lead of the working class struggle and induce the masses of the workers to follow it. The Party organized meetings in the factories, or at the factory gates, and it was from the factories that the workers streamed out to demonstrations or to the barricades.

With the commencement of the black reaction, after the 1905-06 revolution, the Party, after a brief period of semi-illegal existence, was again forced to go underground. Again it had to reorganize itself. Referring to the new conditions, Lenin in 1908 wrote:

"Strongly organized underground Party centres, systematic illegal publication of literature and especially territorial and particularly factory party nuclei, guided by the most progressive of the workers themselves living in direct contact with the masses—this is the basis upon which we are building and will complete an unshakable nucleus of the revolutionary and Social Democratic labor movement. And this illegal nucleus will incomparably more widely than in previous times extend its ramifications, and spread its influence through the Duma, through the trade unions, the cooperatives, and educational societies."

This is extremely important for all the Sections of the Communist International.

Some Sections of the Communist International rightly point out that they cannot openly organize nuclei in the factories because their members are immediately discharged; under these conditions it is necessary to form nuclei hidden from the eyes of the employers' sleuths, but the work of which must be visible to the workers in the factories. These nuclei must have their ramifications in the factory committee, among the members of the trade union, in cooperative societies, sport clubs and other organisations connected with the factory in the same way as the Bolshevik Party had 20 years ago.

Lenin at that time had already raised the question of forming Bolshevik fractions in the trade unions, cooperatives and educational societies. This helped the Bolsheviks in their long and stubborn fight to win over these organizations from within.

At the present time, the basis, the foundation of

the Bolshevik Party is the factory nuclei. To these nuclei the Party devotes most of its attention. At all non-Party Congresses, conferences and on elected bodies, Communist fractions are organized, the task of which is to increase the Party's influence and to secure the acceptance of its policy by the non-Party organizations. Hence we see that Comrade Lenin's fundamental idea of factory nuclei and fractions in non-Party institutions and organizations is carried to its logical conclusion.

The Reorganization of the Party.

As we saw above, prior to 1905, Lenin stood for the narrow, exclusive organization of professional revolutionaries and was against the election of committeemen. Owing to the necessity for extreme secrecy, in those days the election of committeemen was impossible.* In 1905 conditions changed, and Lenin raised the question of the reorganization of the Party. He suggested a wider form of organization of the Party nucleus "less strictly defined" and "freer", but only in comparison with the previous "circles of professional revolutionaries." The Party was made democratic and placed on the elective basis. Nevertheless, the illegal apparatus of the party was preserved, and this enabled it to go back

* At the present time, even under illegal conditions in some places, it is possible to elect Party officials, for not everywhere where the Party is compelled to exist underground, is there such a political regime as existed in Russia under the Czar.

again without difficulty to illegal conditions when circumstances demanded it.

What form of organization the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party assumed at that time can be seen from the following description of the St. Petersburg organization written by Comrade Lenin in an article entitled: "The St. Petersburg Split in 1907". He wrote:

"The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party is organized democratically. This means that the business of the Party is conducted by its members, directly or through representatives, and that all members are equal without exception. All the officials, all the leading bodies, all the institutions of the party are elected, responsible and may be recalled. The business of the Petersburg organization is conducted by the elected Petersburg Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. The supreme body of the Petersburg organization, in view of it being impossible to gather all the members together at one time, (nearly 6,000 members), is a delegate conference of the organization. All the members of the party have the right to send delegates to this conference: one delegate for a definite number of Party members. For example, at the last conference, it was decided to elect one delegate for every 50 members. These delegates must be elected by all the members of the Party, and the decision of the delegates is the supreme and final decision obligatory for the whole of the local organization. But this is not all. In order

to make sure that a decision shall be really democratic, it is not sufficient to gather together delegates of the organization. It is necessary that all the members of the organization, in electing the delegates, shall independently and each one for himself express their opinion on all controversial questions which interest the whole of the organization. Democratically organized parties and leagues cannot, on principle, avoid taking the opinion of the whole of the membership without exception, particularly in important cases, when the question under consideration is of some political action in which the mass is to act independently as for example, a strike, elections, the boycott of some local establishment, etc.

"A strike cannot be conducted with enthusiasm, elections cannot be intelligently conducted, unless every worker voluntarily and intelligently decides for himself whether he should strike or not, whether he should vote for the Cadets* or not, etc. Not all political questions can be decided by a referendum of the whole Party membership. This would entail continuous, wearying and fruitless voting. But the important questions, especially those which are directly connected with definite action by the masses themselves, must be decided democratically, not only by a gathering of delegates, but by a referendum of the whole membership.

"That is why the Petersburg Committee has resolved that the election of delegates to the conference shall take place after the members of the party have discussed the question as to whether an alliance should be concluded with the Cadets, after all the members of the party have voted on this question. Elections are a business in which the masses directly take part. Hence, every Party member must intelligently decide the question as to whether we should vote for Cadets at the elections, or not. And only after an open discussion of this question, after all the members of the Party will have got together, will it be possible for each one of us to take an intelligent and firm decision."

* Cadets is the abbreviated title of the Constitutional Democrats, i. e., the bourgeois liberals.—Translator.

Here, as in many other places, Lenin particularly stresses the activity and participation of the whole of the membership in the decision of Party questions. It is they who at the conferences and congresses elect all the leading party bodies, which are responsible to their constituents. At the same time, the decisions of the higher party organs are obligatory for the subordinate Party organs. This is the application of the principle of democratic centralism, which, already at that time, was practised by Lenin, with some modifications made necessary by the factional struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. We shall refer to this again.

In the severely illegal conditions in the period of the reaction and of the imperialist war, it was impossible normally to convene Party congresses and conferences. In the period between the Fifth Congress (1907) and the Sixth Congress (1917) confer-

ences had sometimes to take the place of congresses. Such was the case for example with the Bolshevik Conference, held in January 1912. It was not always possible to elect the local committees. The principle of cooption of committeemen had to be applied again.

This illustrates the flexibility of the Bolshevik Party. Democracy for it did not present a principle applicable to all times and all conditions. The guiding factor in this was revolutionary expediency. The Bolshevik Party at one moment extends democracy in its ranks and at another it diminishes it (in periods of reaction). In the period of the civil war, and of war communism, the whole of the Bolshevik Party was converted into a military camp, and frequently, the decisions of the Central Committee were carried out as military orders. But, when the Civil War ended and the immediate danger of military intervention passed away, the Bolshevik Party again adopted the principle of democratic centralism.

The Fight Against the Liquidators.

With the inception of the reaction after the revolution of 1905-06, the intellectuals left the Party. The Menshevik hangers-on of the Party revealed their true petty-bourgeois physiognomy and commenced to liquidate the revolutionary slogans and the revolutionary proletarian Party. For the latter, they proposed to "substitute an amorphous body within the limits of legality even at the price of abandoning the program, the tactics and tradi-

tions of the Party." (Extract from resolution of the Party Conference, 1908). The Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin, conducted a determined ideological and organizational fight against these attempts at liquidation. At the All-Russian Conference held in 1908, at which the Mensheviks were still represented, Lenin secured the passage of a resolution which regarded the illegal organization as the corner-stone, but which at the same time, recognized the necessity for taking advantage of all legal possibilities. The resolution particularly emphasized the necessity for organizing factory nuclei, to which it still referred as "committees."

The Mensheviks voted for this resolution, which we reproduce in this volume. The Mensheviks at this conference condemned liquidation as a retreat from revolutionary Marxism. This, however, did not prevent them from following in the footsteps of the liquidators. Only a small group of Mensheviks led by the founder of Russian Marxism, Plechanov, repudiated the majority of the Mensheviks.

A group of "liquidators turned inside out," as Lenin described them, was left in the Bolshevik faction, but Lenin resolutely repudiated them. These were: the Otzovisti (Recallers—from the work "otozvat," meaning to recall, Tr.) who demanded the recall of the Social Democratic deputies from the Duma; the Ultimatists, who demanded that the Social-Democratic faction in the Duma be presented with an ultimatum, calling upon it to be a strictly Party faction and to submit to all the

instructions of the Party centres, or else, resign their membership of the Duma, and the Bogostroyitelli (God Creators, Tr.), who, together with the bourgeois intelligentzia, began to create a "Socialist god" in the period of the reaction. In the resolution passed at an enlarged conference of the editors of the Bolshevik central organ "Proletarii" and representatives from the largest proletarian centres, held in 1909, we read that "in the ranks of the Bolshevik fraction there are elements which are not sufficiently imbued with a proletarian point of view. These elements more and more reveal their lack of Social Democratic consistency, and come more and more sharply in opposition to the fundamental revolutionary Social Democratic tactics. During the past year they have been creating a tendency to formulate a theory of Otzovism and Ultimatism, but which, in fact, reduces to a principle and renders more profound the false impressions concerning Social Democrats, parliamentarism and Social Democratic work in the Duma . . . In spite of their revolutionary phraseology, Otzovism and Ultimatism, to a considerable degree, represent the reverse sides of constitutional illusions inspired by the hope that the Duma itself can satisfy the pressing needs of the people and are actually substituting proletarian ideology by petty-bourgeois tendencies. So-called Ultimatism is causing no less harm to the cause of Social Democracy than open Otzovism. Politically Ultimatism at the present time, in no way differs from Otzovism. By

their attempts to present the individual cases of boycott of representative institutions which have occured at various periods of the revolution in a manner as to make it appear that the boycott is a distinguishing feature of the tactics of Bolshevism also in the period of counter-revolution, the Ultimatists and Otzovists show that their tendencies are nothing more than the reverse side of Menshevism, which advocates the wholesale participation in all representative institutions irrespective of the stage of development of the revolution, and irrespective of the existence or absence of a revolutionary movement . . .

In view of this, the enlarged conference of the Editorial Board of "Proletarii" declares, "that Bolshevism, as a definite tendency in the R. S. D. L. P. has nothing in common with Otzovism and Ultimatism and that the Bolshevist fraction must most determinedly combat these departures from the path of revolutionary Marxism."

Similarly, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, repudiated the "god creators" in philosophy; from the Makhists and similar empiro-critics who abandoned proletarian philosophy — historical materialism, and brought to the working class a hash of bourgeois idealism. Many Social Democrats, even some of the best in Western Europe, strongly condemned Lenin's irreconcilable attitude, and called him a schismatic and disruptor of the labor movement. It is quite evident today, however, that it was precisely this intolerance on Lenin's part towards all

the falsificators of revolutionary Marxism, that enabled him to mould the monolithic Bolshevik Party, without which the Russian proletariat could never have achieved its brilliant victory.

In 1910, the last effort was made to come to an understanding with the Mensheviks. A plenary meeting of the Central Committee was convened at which the Menshevik liquidators were present. Lenin had already given up all hope of coming to an understanding with them, but the illusion still prevailed in the Bolshevik faction that it would be possible to bring the Menshevik Liquidators to the path of a revolutionary Social Democracy. That is why Lenin agreed to this joint meeting being called. At this meeting, a resolution was passed unanimously, and in this resolution we read:

"The historical conditions of the Social-Democratic movement in the epoch of bourgeois counter-revolution inevitably give rise, as a manifestation of the bourgeois influence on the proletariat, to a repudiation of the illegal Social Democratic Party, to a desire to minimize its role and significance, to attempts to modify the program and tactics, the tasks and the slogans of revolutionary Social Democracy, etc., on the one hand, and on the other hand, it gives rise to a repudiation of Social Democratic work in the Duma, and the utilization of legal possibilities, to the failure to understand the importance of both these forms of activity, to lack of ability to adapt revolutionary democratic tactics

to the special historical conditions of the present moment, etc.

"An immutable element of Social Democratic tactics under these conditions is the defeat of both these deviations by extending and intensifying Social-Democratic work in all spheres of the class struggle of the proletariat and by explaining the dangers of these deviations."

This resolution, which regarded Liquidatorism, Otzovism, Ultimatism and "god creation" as "bourgeois influence upon the proletariat" * and called for the deviations both from the right and the "left" to be combatted, was passed unanimously, including the Mensheviks and the "Vperodists" (the followers of the "Vperod"—Forward; Otzovists, etc.). But this was only a pretense at agreement; as a matter of fact, the Mensheviks and the others had no intention of repudiating these deviations.

Ultimately, this led the Bolsheviks, at a conference held in January, 1912, to expel the liquidators from the Party and to repudiate them finally.

Thus ten years of struggle passed by before the Bolshevik Party broke with the Menshevik Liquidators.

Up to that moment, as we saw, a certain wavering occurred even on the Bolshevik Central Committee, on which there were so-called "reconcilers"; but Lenin clearly saw that the Mensheviks were the

* The bourgeoisie gave whole-hearted support to every idea directed towards the liquidation of the revolutionary Party of the working class, to the modification of its slogans, etc.

representatives of another class and the only attitude to be adopted towards them was determined opposition. In 1908 Lenin wrote that at the moment when the final struggle will take place between Labor and Capital, the Mensheviks will be found side by side with the bourgeoisie on the opposite side of the barricade and will then employ different means than they employ in peace-time. Very soon, during the imperialist war, after the revolution—in March, 1917—and more particularly during the October Revolution, this forecast was completely confirmed in the eyes of all.

Lenin revealed this irreconcilability also towards the Western European Parties, practically in periods of decisive conflicts with capital. In an article entitled: "False Talk About Liberty," written in 1920, he wrote:

"If the Mensheviks are retained in the ranks it will be impossible to secure the victory of the proletarian revolution and to protect it. This is obvious on principle. This has been confirmed by experience in Russia and in Hungary . . . . In Russia difficult situations frequently arose in which the Soviet regime would for certain have been overthrown had the Mensheviks, reformists and petty-bourgeois democrats remained in our Party . . . . It is generally admitted that in Italy things are developing towards a decisive battle between the proletariat and the bourgeois for the capture of political power. At such a moment it is not only absolutely necessary to remove the Mensheviks,

Reformists, and Turatti-ists from the Party, but it may be useful even to remove Communists, who waver and reveal inclinations towards 'unity' with the Reformists, from all responsible posts. . . . On the eve of revolution and in the midst of severe fighting for its victory, the slightest wavering within the Party may lead to the loss of all, to the defeat of the revolution and to power being torn out of the hands of the proletariat; for this power has not yet been consolidated, and the pressure of the enemy upon it is still too strong. If wavering leaders retire at such a moment it will not weaken, but on the contrary, it will strengthen the Party, the labor movement and the revolution."

Unfortunately, this was not done in time in Italy and we saw the deplorable consequences of this lack of determination.

In order to illustrate the views of V. I. Lenin on the question of organization in the period of the fight against the Liquidators, we reproduce the resolution of the Conference of Dec., 1908, extracts from an article written by Lenin, entitled "On the Road,"—a review of the resolution of the December Conference,—extracts from another article entitled "Liquidation of the Liquidators"—resolution of the Bolshevik Conference of January, 1912, on the question of organization and the Liquidators, at which the Bolsheviks expelled the Liquidators from the Party and finally repudiated them.

Party Unity and Party Discipline.

The Bolshevik Party grew up in the course of an

irreconcilable struggle against all deviations from the revolutionary Marxian policy. Lenin never glossed over differences of opinion, never tried to conceal them by a screen of outward well being, peace and harmony. On the contrary, with revolutionary passion he fought to the end against all retreats and deviations and did not hesitate even before splits and expulsions, not only of Mensheviks and Liquidators, but also of revolutionary phrasemongers like the Otzovists, Ultimatists, and "god creators." However, he was not in favor of splits at all costs. He first of all explored all possibilities of directing the erring comrades on the path of revolutionary Marxism, and only when all his efforts produced no favorable results did he decide to break with them. After the first split, when, in 1905, the Mensheviks, as a result of the pressure of the masses, moved to the Left and in the practical revolutionary himself advocated unity. Subsequently, in the Spring of 1905, the Fourth Congress of the R. S. D. L. P., known as the Unity Congress, was held. At this Congress the Mensheviks obtained a majority, but Lenin did not leave the Party. He continued the fight within its ranks in order to win it from within. By the time the Fifth Congress of the R. S. D. L. P. was held in 1907, the Bolsheviks had managed to secure a majority. The leadership of the Party passed into the hands of the Bolsheviks. The Mensheviks had a definitely formed fraction in the Party. In 1908 they came forward openly as the liquidators of the revolutionary Party.

What was Lenin's attitude at that time,—finding himself in one Party side by side with the Mensheviks,—towards the principles of democratic centralism, Party discipline and Party unity? Of course, he insisted on the freedom of factional conflict; he demanded freedom of discussion, and criticism of the Central Committee. At that time he most energetically championed the rights of the local organizations against the Menshevik Central Committee. At the same time, however, he recognized as immutable—except for some slight reservation—the principles of democratic centralism and strict Party discipline. In an article entitled "The Fight Against the Pro-Cadet Social Democrats and Party Discipline," he wrote:

"We have more than once, on principle, defined our views on the significance of discipline and the conception of discipline in the ranks of the Labor Party. We defined it as: **unity of action, freedom of discussion and criticism.** Only such a form of discipline is worthy of a democratic Party of the progressive class. The strength of the working class is organization. Without organization the mass of the proletariat is nothing. Organized, it is all. Organization is unity of action, but of course, all action is useful only because and to the extent that it advances and does not retreat, to the extent that it intellectually combines the proletariat and lifts it up and does not degrade and weaken it. Organization without ideas is an absurdity which in practice converts the workers into miserable

hangers-on of the bourgeoisie in power. Consequently, without the freedom of discussion and criticism, the proletariat does not recognize unity of action. For that reason, intelligent workers must never forget that sometimes serious violations of principles occur, which make the break-off of organizational relations absolutely necessary."

Subsequently, this led to a complete split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. In 1906-1907, however, Lenin regarded a complete split as premature, and therefore, sometimes made very far-reaching concessions to the Mensheviks. For example, the Menshevik Central Committee insisted upon a bloc with the liberals at the time of the elections to the Second Duma. Lenin was strongly opposed to this bloc, but in order to avoid something worse he took up the position that the Party Conference, which had just been held, left it to the local organizations to solve this question for themselves. In the article referred to, entitled: "The Fight against Pro-Cadet Social Democrats and Party Discipline," Lenin wrote:

"Before the Party there are two platforms: one proposed by 18 delegates of the Conference—Mensheviks and Bundists; the other proposed by 14 delegates—Bolsheviks, Poles and Letts. The competent bodies of the local organizations must select, amend, add to or substitute these platforms by some other. After the competent organs have come to a decision, we, all the members of the Party, will act as one man. A Bolshevik in Odessa must go

to the ballot box and vote for a Cadet even if that action makes him vomit. A Menshevik in Moscow must vote a pure Social-Democratic ticket, however much his soul may long for the Cadet."

In this instance Lenin had to employ strategy against the Mensheviks; nevertheless, even then he insisted upon Party discipline. This insistence naturally became stronger when the Bolsheviks finally broke off all connections with the Mensheviks and particularly when the Bolshevik Party came to power.

In his concluding speech at the 11th Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1922 (this was the last Congress of the Russian Communist Party at which Lenin was able to be present) he said:

"We must always bear in mind that the army (our Party) of 600,000 men must be the vanguard of the working class, that without iron discipline it will be impossible to fulfill our task. The fundamental condition for the maintenance and preservation of our strict discipline is loyalty. All the old methods and resources for creating discipline have been destroyed. At the basis of all our activity we have laid only a high degree of thoughtfulness and intelligence. This has enabled us to maintain a discipline that stands higher than the discipline of any other State, and which rests on a basis totally different from that upon which the discipline of capitalist society is barely maintained, if it is maintained at all."

Lenin frequently took up the question of disci-

pline. And it is thanks to him that in the Russian Communist Party we have a voluntary, intelligent discipline, which has not its equal in any other mass Party. More than once the enemies of the Party have rejoiced (during the Party discussion, for example) at the impending collapse of the discipline of the Russian Communist Party. But on each occasion the Party emerged from these trials stronger than ever. The fundamental idea running through this discipline has been hitherto, and will remain, the following: **the interests of the proletarian revolution and of the Communist Party stand above all.**

However, in order that such a discipline may be really maintained, complete unity of views on fundamental questions is necessary. We know that Lenin created this unity of views first of all in the Bolshevist section of the Party, and later throughout the whole Party, and resolutely fought against all those who strove to disturb this unity. He was a determined opponent of all groupings and factions within the Bolshevik Party: for they inevitably lead to the weakening of the Party, and represent a fatal danger to its unity and to the rule of the Soviet government. When certain deviations were revealed during the discussion on the trade unions in 1921, Lenin, at the 10th Congress of the R. C. P., demanded that these deviations be resolutely condemned. "We," he said, "are a Party fighting amidst acute difficulties. We must say: in order that unity may be preserved certain deviations must

be condemned." And the Congress by an overwhelming majority of votes, condemned them. The 10th Congress also passed a resolution on Party unity,—which Lenin supported,—which resolutely condemned factions and groupings.

The prohibition of factions and groupings does not imply, of course, the prohibition of the discussion of controversial questions and criticism of the activity of the leading Party organs. On the contrary, in the nuclei, at general meetings, at Party conferences and congresses, every member has a right to discuss controversial questions, criticize the activity of the leading Party organs, and bring forward his own suggestions. But as the resolution of the 13th Conference of the R. C. P. says: "Freedom of discussion inside the Party under no circumstances implies the freedom to undermine Party discipline. The Central Committee of the Party and all local Party centres must immediately take the sternest measures to preserve iron, Bolshevik discipline everywhere where attempts are being made to shake it."

Thus, freedom of criticism must not be converted into freedom to disturb Party discipline with impunity.

At the 10th Congress Lenin said: "We are not a debating club. We, of course, can and will publish collections of articles, special literature, etc., but we have to fight under most difficult conditions and therefore we must be combined."

The discussion of controversial questions is per-

missible only up to the moment that they are decided. After these questions have been decided by the leading organs of the Party conferences or congresses, these decisions must be carried out without any reservation, even if a given member, or a whole organization, does not agree with the decision. Absolute subordination of the minority to the majority,—this is the fundamental principle of the Party discipline of the R. C. P., as carried out in it by Lenin.

To acquaint the reader with Lenin's views on Party discipline and Party unity, we include in this volume extracts from Lenin's pamphlet: "Infantile Diseases of Left Wing Communism," which contains an excellent description of the qualities of the Bolsheviks which enabled them to capture power and retain it under the most difficult conditions: extracts from Lenin's speeches at the 10th Congress of the R. C. P.,—giving his views on the heated discussions on the Trade Union Movement which arose at that time—and the resolution of the 10th Congress on Party unity.

The Party as the Vanguard of the Working Class and the Instrument of Proletarian Dictatorship.

We have already seen above that Lenin, as Marx did in the Communist Manifesto, defined the Party as the vanguard of the working class. In chapter two of the Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels, we read the following: "The Communists . . . . in the proletarian movement in various

countries put forward and champion the common interests of the whole of the proletariat, irrespective of national interests . . . . in the various stages of development through which the proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie is proceeding; they always champion the common interests of the movement as a whole. Thus, the Communists practically represent the most determined and the most progressive section of the Labor Parties of all countries, and with regard to theory they have this advantage over the rest of the masses of the proletariat, that they understand the conditions, the progress, and the general results of the Labor movement. They have no interests other than those which coincide with the interests of the whole of the proletariat."

This is expressed with exceptional clarity in the theses passed by the Second Congress of the Communist International on the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution. In these theses we read:

"The Communist Party is a section of the working class; its most progressive, most class conscious, and therefore, its most revolutionary section. A Communist Party is formed by the selection of the most class conscious, most courageous, and most far-sighted workers. The Communist Party has no interests differing from the interests of the working class. A Communist Party differs from the rest of the mass of the workers in that it sees the whole of the historical path of the working class

as a whole, and strives at all the turning points of this path to champion, not individual groups, not individual trades, but the interests of the working class as a whole. The Communist Party is the organizational-political lever by the aid of which the most progressive section of the working class directs the mass of the proletariat and semi-proletariat along the right path."

This is a condensed expression of the principles of the teachings of Lenin on the Party. In his speech at the Second Congress of the Communist International Lenin said:

"A political Party can combine only a minority of the class, in the same way as the really class conscious workers throughout the whole of capitalist society represent only a minority of all the workers. For that reason we are compelled to admit that only a class conscious minority can guide the vast masses of the workers and get them to follow it . . . . If the minority is really class conscious, if it succeeds in getting the masses to follow it, if it is able to reply to every question that comes up on the order of the day, then it is in essence a Party . . . . If the minority is not able to lead the masses, link itself closely up with them, then it is not a Party and is good for nothing even if it calls itself a Party."

Thus the Communist Party combines only a minority of the working class. Until the capture of power by the proletariat, and a long time after that, it cannot embrace the majority of the working

class. But it must be most closely connected with the working class, it must represent and champion the interests of the working class as a whole, and not those of any individual group or trade. It speaks and acts in the name of the whole of the working class. It is the vanguard of the working class, "the most progressive, the most class conscious, and therefore the most revolutionary section of the working class." For that reason the Communist Party must never drag at the tail of the movement, but must take the lead of it. It must lead the whole labor movement.

To capture power, the Communist Party must win over to its side the majority of the working class. In order to be able to do this, in order to become the real expression of the interests of the working class, the Party must take an active part in all the conflicts between Labor and Capital, in the whole of the struggle of the working class and the poor peasantry against their exploiters and oppressors, and to lead this struggle. It must be most closely connected with all the organizations of the working class: trade unions, cooperative societies, factory committees, parliamentary and municipal fractions, working women's organizations, educational organizations, youth leagues, and Soviet and State organs if the proletariat is in power. In these organs and organizations the Communists must form fractions and through these fractions lead them.

In "Infantile Diseases of Leftism" Lenin says:

"The Party is the highest form of the class organization of the proletariat; it should lead all the other forms of proletarian organizations, and take a most active part in their struggles. This it does through Communist fractions."

That is why Lenin so determinedly opposed the so-called "neutrality" of trade unions, and other labor organizations, the "independence" of parliamentary fractions, etc. As a matter of fact this "neutrality" and "independence" is a most reprehensible dependence upon the bourgeoisie and its agents.

Lenin taught that the proletariat cannot bring about a victorious proletarian revolution without having its own independent, political Party. This revolution cannot be brought about by trade unions, or by cooperative societies, although these organizations play an important part in the struggle of the working class for its emancipation from capitalism. Only because it had a strong Bolshevik Party was the Russian proletariat able to secure victory over the capitalists and landowners. Only thanks to the existence of this Party was it possible to retain these gains. On the other hand, if the Party had not had such auxiliary mass organizations like the trade unions, if it had not won over to its side the millions of trade unionists, it could never have captured power, and still less retain it in its hands throughout this difficult period. That is why work in the trade unions and winning them over to our side is of such enormous importance.

Lenin taught that the Communist Party is not only an instrument for bringing about the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also an instrument for retaining, strengthening, and extending this dictatorship. It is the general staff of the proletarian revolution. Unless such an organizing and leading staff exists, the victory of the proletariat and the maintenance of power is impossible. Hence, the enormous importance of Party organization, of unity of view and singleness of will, the strictest Party discipline, and the expulsion from its ranks of all opportunist and alien elements.

The Bolshevik Party became a ruling Party and began to attract to itself elements alien to it. This became particularly dangerous at the time of the transition to N. E. P., when the civil war had come to an end. Lenin then raised the question of purging the Party and proposed that 99% of the ex-Mensheviks be expelled. Of course this was not meant to be taken literally. In suggesting this, Lenin had in mind principally, the intellectuals, who joined the Bolshevik Party after the victory of the October Revolution. He suggested that special attention should be paid to these, to see whether they did not come into the Party in pursuit of selfish aims, and whether they had not brought with them corrupting elements, or deviations alien to a Bolshevik Party. Such elements must be ruthlessly driven from the Party. Lenin's motto was: "Little and Good."

Lenin taught that in the period of transition from capitalism to Communism the proletariat can retain

power only in alliance with the peasantry. For this period he put forward the slogan: **Dictatorship of the proletariat in reliance upon the peasantry.** Only a Party like the Bolshevik Party could carry out this dictatorship. But to achieve it the Russian Communist Party had to link up closely with the peasantry and prove to it that only in alliance with the working class through the proletarian revolution could the peasant, once and for all, throw the landlord from his back. By this means, the Party is able to win a reliable ally in the fight to establish and consolidate the proletarian dictatorship. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party devoted considerable attention to this. Organizationally, the Party strengthened its influence in the villages by establishing Communist nuclei among the peasantry and among the Red Army men in the Red Army, the majority of whom are peasants temporarily removed from the land, and by means of Communist fractions in non-Party peasant organizations and various organs like the Soviets, Peasant Mutual Aid Committees, cooperative societies, in which the peasants are organized.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is exercised through the Soviet government of workers and peasants the general guidance of which is in the hands of the Party, exercised through the various Communist fractions.

In the last years of his life, being absorbed entirely in the general political leadership of the Party and the Soviet government, Comrade Lenin was able to devote little attention to the special question

of organization. However, all the valuable work which had been done with regard to organization in the Russian Communist Party, all that which is of enormous importance for all the Sections of the Communist International, was done with the direct participation of Comrade Lenin and sometimes on his instructions, as for example the recruiting of as many workers and peasants as possible—including the more backward sections,—the working women, and peasant women, for the work of administering the country; putting forward workers from the bench to occupy responsible positions, the introduction of plan in Party work, the establishment of a control commission, etc., etc.

Lenin's Testament.

Lenin left to us the fundamental organizational principles of Party organization which have remained in force to this day and which should be learned thoroughly by all the Sections of the Communist International.

These fundamental principles are as follows:

1) The doctrine that the Communist Party is the vanguard of the working class. This doctrine, taken from Marx and Engels, was emphasized by Lenin, developed and excellently applied in modern conditions.

2) The old doctrine, but one which has not yet been carried out by the overwhelming majority of the Communist Parties, namely: the formation of the principle cadres of the Party, so-called professional revolutionaries.

3) Activity of all the members of the Party, their direct participation in the work of the organization.

4) The basis of the Party organization, its "fortresses," are the factory nuclei.

5) The Communist Party, through Communist fractions in non-Party workers' and peasants' organizations, must link up closely with the masses of the workers and peasants and take an active part in all their struggles against their exploiters and oppressors and lead the struggles through the Communist nuclei and Communist fractions.

6) Democratic centralism in the Party and in the Communist International.

7) Iron discipline for the proletarian Party.

To carry out these fundamental organizational principles of Leninism, the Sections of the Communist International have enormous work to do. With regard to the Communist Parties of Western Europe and America, it may be said today what Lenin wrote in 1900 in No. 1. of the Social Democratic newspaper "Iskra." He wrote:

"The question of organization is one of our most painful questions. In this respect we have lagged behind considerably from the old workers in the Russian revolutionary movement. We must frankly confess this defect. We must train men and women who will devote to the revolution, not merely their spare evenings, but the whole of their lives. We must build up an organization so large as to enable us to introduce division of labor in the various spheres of our work."

In 1901 in an article entitled "Where to Begin," Lenin wrote:

"We must work at forming a militant organization and conducting political agitation even in 'drab' and peaceful conditions, and even in the period of 'declining revolutionary spirit.' More than that, it is precisely in such conditions and in such a period that this work is necessary, because in the moment of outbreaks and outbursts it will be too late to set up an organization. The organization must be ready, in order to be able to develop its activity immediately." This also applies completely to the Communist Parties of Western Europe and of America.

The Communist Parties of Western Europe and America will be able to fulfill Lenin's will in the sphere of organization only when they have set up proletarian Parties closely linked up with the masses of the workers and the toiling peasantry, similar to the Bolshevik Party; Parties capable under difficult conditions of leading the struggle of the working class and the toiling peasantry.

In order to establish the closest possible connection between the Communist Party and the masses of the workers, it is essential to reorganize the Parties on the basis of factory nuclei. In non-party worker and peasant organizations, Communist fractions must be formed. It is necessary that every member of the Party be active and that the local organizations show initiative.

"In the present epoch of acute class war," wrote

Lenin in "Conditions for Affiliation to the Comintern"—"the Communist Party will be able to fulfill its duty only if it will be organized in the most centralized manner, if it will be governed by an iron discipline, bordering on military discipline, and if the Party centre will be an authoritative organ with extensive powers enjoying the general confidence of the Party.

Even in the present 'normal times' it is necessary to put forward the principle of democratic centralism. At the same time, however, in view of the temporary ebb of the revolutionary tide and the appearance of right and left wing deviations in various Parties, it is necessary, with more determination than ever, to combat every distortion of Marxism and Leninism, every deviation from the strict consistent Marxist-Leninist line of policy. The unity of the Party, internal compactness and strict revolutionary discipline in its ranks, are not less necessary now than in the period of civil war. Finally, flexibility of organization, the ability quickly to adapt it to changing conditions,—while preserving the fundamental principles of Bolshevik organization,—are necessary."

This is the testament left by Lenin to all the Sections of the Communist International as given in his speeches at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International at the end of 1922. The task of all the Sections of the Communist International is speedily to fulfill it.

V. Mitzkovitch-Kapsukas.

I.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

(From "Where to Begin?," "Iskra" No. 4, May, 1901).

. . . . In our opinion, the starting point of all our activities, the first practical step towards creating the organization we desire and the factor which will enable us constantly to develop, to broaden and deepen that organization, is the creation of a national (all-Russian) political newspaper. A paper is what we need above all; without it we cannot systematically carry on that extensive and theoretically sound propaganda and agitation which is the chief and constant duty of the Social Democrats in general, and the essential task of the present moment in particular, when interest in politics and in questions of Socialism has seized upon wide sections of the population. Never before has the need been so strongly felt for supplementing individual agitation in the form of personal influence, local leaflets, pamphlets, etc., by a general and regularly conducted agitation, such as can be carried on only with the assistance of a periodical press. It would be hardly an exaggeration to say that the frequency and regular publication (and distribution) of the paper would serve as an exact measure of the extent

to which that primary and most essential branch of our militant activities has been firmly established. Moreover, the paper must be an all-Russian paper. As long as we are unable to bring united influence to bear on the population and on the government with the aid of the printed word, it is utopian to think that we shall be able unitedly to exert other more complex and difficult, but more effective forms of influence. Our movement, intellectually as well as practically (organizationally), suffers most of all from its dispersion, from the fact that the vast majority of Social Democrats are immersed in local work, which narrows their point of view, limits their activities and affects their conspiratorial skill and training. It is to this dispersedness that we must ascribe the vacillation and hesitation of which I spoke above. The **first step** towards removing this defect and transforming several local movements into a united national (Russian) movement is the creation of a national newspaper. Finally, it is a **political** paper we need. Without a political organ, a movement deserving to be called a political movement is impossible in modern Europe. Without such a paper we shall be absolutely unable to fulfill our task, namely, to concentrate all the elements of political unrest and discontent and with them enrich the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. The first step we have already accomplished; we have aroused in the working class a passion for "economic," factory, denunciation. We have now to make the second step: to arouse in every to any

extent enlightened section of the population, the passion for **political** denunciation. We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged by the fact that the voice of political denunciation is still feeble, rare and timid. This is not because of a general submission to political despotism, but because those who are able and ready to denounce have no tribune from which to speak, because there is no audience to listen passionately to and approve of what the orators say, and because the latter can nowhere perceive among the people forces to whom it would be worth while to direct their complaint against the "omnipotent" Russian government. But a change is now taking place, and a very rapid one. Such a force now exists—the revolutionary proletariat. It has demonstrated its readiness not merely to listen to and to support an appeal for a political struggle, but also to fight boldly in that struggle. We are now in a position to create a tribune for the national denunciation of the Czarist government and it is our duty to do so. That tribune must be a Social Democratic paper. The Russian working class, in contrast to other classes and sections of Russian society, betray a permanent desire for political knowledge and, not only during periods of unusual unrest, but constantly, demand illegal literature. Given that demand, given the training of experienced revolutionary leaders, which has already begun, and given great concentration of the working class, which makes it the real master in the working class quarters of large towns, in factory

settlements and industrial villages, the creation of a political paper is something quite within the powers of the proletariat. Through the intermediary of the proletariat, the paper will penetrate to the town middle class and to the village handicraftsmen and peasants, and will thus become a real national political paper.

But the role of a paper is not confined solely to the spreading of ideas, to political education and to procuring political allies. A paper is not merely a collective propagandist and collective agitator. It is also a collective organizer. In that respect it must be compared with the scaffolding that is constructed around a building, which makes the contours of the future structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labour. With the aid of, and around a paper, there will automatically develop an organization which will be concerned not only with local activities, but also in regular general work; which will teach its members carefully to watch political events, to estimate their importance and their influence on the various sections of the population, and to devise suitable methods for influencing these events through the revolutionary party. The mere technical problem of procuring a regular supply of material for the newspaper and its regular distribution will make it necessary to create a network of agents of a united party, who will be in close contact with each other.

will be acquainted with the general situation, will be accustomed to fulfill the detailed functions of the national all-Russian work, and who will test their strength in the organization of revolutionary activities. This network of agents * will form the skeleton of the organization we need: namely, one that is sufficiently large to embrace the whole country; sufficiently wide and many-sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labor; sufficiently tried and tempered undeviatingly to carry out its own work in its own way in spite of all adversities, changes and unexpected surprises; sufficiently adaptable to be able if necessary to renounce an open fight against superior and concentrated forces and yet capable of taking advantage of the awkwardness and immobility of the enemy and attacking at a time and place where he least expects attack. Today we are faced with the comparatively simple task of supporting students demonstrating in the streets of large towns: tomorrow, perhaps, we shall be faced with more difficult tasks, as for instance, supporting an unemployed movement in some locality or other. Tomorrow, perhaps, we may have to be ready at our posts to take a revolutionary

* It is understood, of course, that these agents can act successfully only if they work in close conjunction with the local committees (groups or circles) of our Party. Indeed, the whole plan we have sketched can be carried out, only with the most active support of the committees, which have already made more than one attempt to achieve a united party, and which, I am certain, sooner or later, and in one form or another, will achieve that unity.

part in some peasants' revolt. Today, we must take advantage of the strained political situation created by the government's offensive against the zemstvos. Tomorrow, we have to support the population in their protest against the outbreak of some Czarist Bashi-Bazak and help, by boycott, agitation, demonstrations, etc., to teach him such a lesson that he will be forced to beat an open retreat. This stage of military preparedness can be achieved only by means of the constant activity of a regular army. If we unite our forces for the conduct of a common paper, that work will prepare and bring forward not only the most courageous propagandists, but also the most skilled organizers and the most talented political Party leaders, who will know the right moment to issue the call to battle and will be capable of conducting that battle . . . .

The Newspaper as Collective Organizer. (From "What is to be Done?", 1902).

If we could manage to bring it about that all, or the great majority of the local committees, groups and circles shall take up the common task, we could in the very near future establish a weekly newspaper which would be regularly distributed in tens of thousands of copies, all over Russia. This newspaper would become a part of an enormous pair of bellows, blowing every spark of the class struggle and of popular discontent into a general conflagration. Around this, what is in itself a very innocent and inconsiderable but regular and common task in

the fullest sense of the word, a permanent army of tried fighters would be systematically rallied and receive their training. On the scaffolding and steps of this common organizational structure would soon rise up from among our revolutionaries, our Social Democratic Jeliabovs and our Russian workers—our Bebels, who will take the lead of the mobilized army and rouse the whole people to put an end to the shame and the curse of Russia. It is of this that we must dream.

Up till now, the majority of our local organizations have concerned themselves almost exclusively with local organs and work actively almost exclusively upon them. This is wrong. The very opposite should be done. The majority of the local organizations should concern themselves principally with the all-Russian organ and concentrate upon it chiefly. Until we do this, we shall not be able to serve the movement with press agitation covering all questions. When this will be done, however, normal relations between the necessary central and the necessary local organs will be established.

II.

LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION *

(From "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Problem of Organization"—September, 1902).

. . . . As regards the district groups, one of their most important functions is properly to organize **literature distribution.** As a rule, I think, the district groups should act as the **intermediaries** between the committees and the factories, and even as **transmitters.** Their chief duty should be the correct conspiratorial distribution of the literature received from the committee. This is an extremely important duty, for if we can secure contact between a special district group of distributors and all the factories in that district and of the largest number of workers' houses in that district, it will be of great value, both in case of demonstrations and in the event of uprisings. To train a network of agents for the rapid and correct distribution of literature, leaflets, proclamations, etc., is to perform the greater half of the work of preparation for an eventual demonstration, uprising. It is too late to

* Although written in 1902, when not a single Social Democratic leaflet could be distributed legally, what is said here may be equally applied to those countries where our press is legal. The extensive distribution of our legal publications must be carefully organized. (Editor).

start organizing literature distribution at a moment of unrest, a strike, or ferment; it must be done gradually, distributions being made twice or even three times a month. If there are no newspapers it must be done with leaflets, but the distributing machine must in no case be allowed to remain idle. We must try to bring the machine to such a pitch of perfection that the whole working class population can be advised, and, so to speak, mobilized overnight. That is by no means a utopian demand, provided there is a systematic transmission of leaflets from the centers to the narrower intermediary groups and from them to the distributors . . . .

THE AMATEURISHNESS OF THE ECONOMISTS AND AN ORGANIZATION OF REVOLUTIONARIES.

(From "What Is to Be Done?"—February, 1902).

a) Why "Amateurish"?

. . . . We will attempt to answer this question by giving a brief description of the activities of a typical Social Democratic circle during the years 1894-1901. / We have already described the unbounded enthusiasm displayed for Marxism by the student youth of that period. This enthusiasm Marxism aroused not only, indeed not so much, as a theory, or because it was a reply to the question, what is to be done?—but as a call to arms. / The new soldiers went into the fight armed with amazingly primitive weapons and with astonishingly little preparation. / Indeed, in the majority of cases there were neither weapons nor preparation of any kind. They went to war like peasants from the plough, armed with simple cudgels. [A circle of students] unconnected with the older active members of the movement, unconnected with groups in other places or even in other districts of the

same town (or with other educational institutions), having made no attempt to organize the various sections of revolutionary work and possessing no systematic plan of campaign calculated for any protracted period, established contact with the workers and set about their tasks. The circle would gradually extend its sphere of propaganda and agitation and by its activities would arouse the sympathy of fairly wide sections of the workers and of a certain section of educated society who supplied funds and placed ever fresh groups of young people at the disposal of the "committee." The power of attraction of the committee (or of the league of combatants) would become stronger, its sphere of activities extend; its activities developed in an absolutely spontaneous and elemental fashion. The people who a year, or even a few months before, were discussing at students' meetings the question of what was to be done, establishing and maintaining contact with the workers and preparing and distributing leaflets, now began to set up connections with other groups of revolutionaries, procure literature, prepare to publish a local paper, start to talk of organizing demonstrations, and, finally, engage in open warfare (such open warfare might, according to circumstances, be the first agitational leaflet, or the first number of a newspaper or the first demonstration). And, as a rule, these activities were doomed at the very outset to immediate and complete collapse. Immediate and complete, because the acts of war were not based upon

a systematic, carefully thought-out and gradually prepared plan for stubborn and protracted action, but were the simple and spontaneous development of group work conducted on traditional lines; because the police, of course, almost invariably knew the ring-leaders of the local movement, who had usually "recommended" themselves to attention from their early student days, and only awaited the most favorable moment for the slaughter, deliberately allowing the circle to become sufficiently strong and extensive in order to provide a tangible **corpus delicti** *, and deliberately leaving a certain number of persons untouched "for breeding purposes" (according to the technical phrase, which, I believe, is also used by the gendarmes). Such warfare may be likened to the attack of a band of peasants armed with cudgels upon a modern army. One can only marvel at the vitality of a movement which is able to extend and grow and gain successes in spite of the complete absence of preparation and equipment. It is true that from the historical point of view the primitive nature of the equipment was at first not only inevitable, **but even legitimate,** for it was one of the means by which fighters were widely attracted. But as soon as real serious warfare began (that is, with the outbreak of the strike movement, in the summer of 1896) the defects of our military organization began to make themselves more and more felt. The government, bewildered at first and guilty of a series

* Evidence of crime.

of blunders (such as the manifesto to society describing the evil deeds of the Socialists, and the exiling of workers from the capitals to the provincial industrial centres), rapidly adapted itself to the new conditions of warfare and managed to place its armies of provocateurs, spies and gendarmes, armed with all the latest improvements, wherever required. So frequent did pogroms become, embracing such large numbers of victims and sweeping off local groups, that the workers literally lost their leaders; the movement assumed a sporadic character; consistency and continuity of work became absolutely impossible. The amazing dispersedness of the local workers, the casual composition of the circles, the lack of preparation and the narrow outlook on questions of theory, politics and organization which prevailed, were inevitable consequences of the conditions we have described. Matters came to such a pass that in certain localities the workers, because of our lack of resistance and the absence of conspiratorial methods, began to lose confidence in the intellectuals and draw away from them. "The intellectuals," they said, "lead us into defeat much too thoughtlessly" . . . .

b) Organizations of Workers and Organizations of Revolutionaries.

It is only natural that a Social Democrat who regards the conception of the political struggle as being coincident with the conception of the "economic struggle against the masters and the government," should regard the conception "organization of revolutionaries" as being more or less coincident with the conception "organization of workers." And this, in fact, is the case; so that when we talk of organization we are literally talking different languages. I recall, for instance, a conversation I once had with a fairly consistent economist (1) with whom I had not been previously acquainted. We were talking about the brochure "Who Will Make the Political Revolution?" and we were very soon agreed that its chief defect was that it ignored the question of organization. We were beginning to believe ourselves in complete agreement, — but as the conversation proceeded it appeared that we were talking of different things. My interlocutor accused the author of ignoring strike funds, mutual aid societies, etc., whereas I had in mind an organization of revolutionaries, as an essential factor in "making" the political revolution. Once that difference became clear I do not remember to have found myself in agreement with that economist on any question of importance again!

Wherein lay the source of our disagreement? It lay in the fact that on questions both of organization and politics the economists are forever lapsing from Social Democracy into trade unionism. The political struggle of the Social Democrats is far more extensive and complex than the economic struggle of the workers against the masters and the government. Similarly (and indeed for that reason) the organizations of the revolutionary Social

Democrats must inevitably be different from the organizations of the workers designed for the latter struggle. The organizations of the workers must in the first place be trade organizations; secondly, they must be as wide as possible, and thirdly, they must be as little conspiratorial as possible (here, of course, and below, I have only autocratic Russia in mind). On the other hand, the organizations of revolutionaries must be comprised first and foremost of people whose profession consists of being revolutionaries (that is why I speak of organizations of revolutionaries, meaning revolutionary Social Democrats). In face of this common characteristic the members of such an organization must abandon all distinction between workers and intellectuals, let alone distinctions between trades and professions. Such an organization must of necessity be not too extensive and as conspiratorial as possible. Let us dwell upon this threefold distinction.

In countries where political freedom prevails the distinction between trade union and political organizations is as clear as the distinction between trade unionist and Social Democrat. The relation of the latter to the former will naturally vary in each country according to historical legal and other conditions,—it may be more or less close and more or less complex (from our point of view it should be as close and as little complex as possible), but in free countries there can be absolutely no question of the organizations of the trade unionists and the

organizations of the Social Democrats being identical. In Russia, however, the yoke of autocracy at first glance effaces all distinctions between a Social Democratic organization and a workers' union, since all workers' unions and all circles are prohibited, and since the chief manifestation and weapon of the economic struggle of the workers —the strike—is regarded as a crime (and sometimes even as a political crime!). Conditions in our country therefore strongly "impel" the workers who are conducting the economic struggle to engage in political questions. They also "impel" the Social Democrats to confuse trade unionism with Social Democracy (and our Krichevskys, Martynovs and their like, who speak enthusiastically of the first kind of impulsion, fail to observe the "impulsion" of the second kind). And indeed, just picture to yourselves people who are 99% immersed in "the economic struggle against the masters and the government." Some of them during the whole course of their activity (four to six months) never once come up against the necessity for a more complex organization of revolutionaries; others, perhaps, come across the fairly widely dispersed Bernstein literature, from which they convince themselves of the profound importance of "the course of the gray, daily struggle." Others, finally, will be carried away, perhaps, by the seductive idea of showing the world a new example of "close and organized contact with the proletarian struggle"—contact between the trade union and Social Demo-

cratic movement. Such people perhaps argue that the later a country appears in the arena of capitalism, the more may the Socialists of that country take part in and support the trade union movement, and the less reason is there for non-Social Democratic trade unions. So far the argument is absolutely right; but unfortunately it goes beyond that and hints at the complete fusion of Social Democracy with trade unionism. We shall soon see from the example of the statutes of the Petersburg Fighting Union (3) what a harmful effect this has upon our plan of organization. The workers' organizations for carrying on the economic struggle should be trade union organizations; every Social Democratic worker should as far as possible support and actively work within these organizations. That is true. But it would be far from our interests to demand that the members of "craft" unions should be exclusively Social Democrats. The effect of that would only be to narrow our influence over the masses. Let every worker who understands that a union is necessary in order to carry on the struggle against the masters and the government take part in the craft unions. The very objects of the craft unions would be unattainable unless they united all who were open to even this elementary level of understanding, and unless they were extremely wide organisations. The wider these organizations are the wider our influence over them will be. The influence will be exerted not only by the "elemental" development of the economic struggle, but also by the direct and conscious action of the Socialists in the union upon its members. But a wide organization cannot be a strictly conspiratorial organization (since the latter demands far greater preparatory work than is required for the economic struggle). How is the contradiction between the necessity for a large membership and the necessity for strictly conspiratorial methods to be reconciled? How are we to make the craft unions as little conspiratorial as possible? Generally speaking, there are perhaps only two ways to this end: either the craft unions become legalized (which in some countries precedes the legalization of the Socialist and political unions), or the organization is kept a secret one, but so "free" and "loose" that the need for conspiratorial methods become almost negligible as far as the mass of the members are concerned.

The legislation of the non-Socialist and non-political workers' union in Russia has already begun, and there is no doubt that every step made by our rapidly growing Social Democratic working class movement will increase and encourage the attempts at legalization. These attempts proceed for the most part from supporters of the existing order, but they must proceed also from the workers themselves and from the liberal intellectuals. The banner of legality has already been unfurled by the Vasilievs and the Zubatovs (4), support has been promised by the Ozerovs and the Bormsams; and followers of the new tendency are to be found even

among the workers. Henceforward we must count with this tendency. How we are to count with it —of this there can be no two opinions among Social Democrats. We must constantly expose the part played in this movement by the Zubatovs and the Vasilievs and by the gendarmes and the priests and make it clear to the workers what their intentions are. We must also expose the conciliatory "harmonic" undertones which will make themselves heard in the speeches delivered by liberal politicians at the open assemblies of the workers, whether they proceed from an earnest conviction as to the desirability for the peaceful cooperation of the classes, whether they proceed from a desire to get in well with the masters, or are simply the result of sheer clumsiness. We must also warn the workers against the traps often set by the police, who at such open meetings and permitted societies "seek their men with fire," and who through the legal organizations endeavor to plant their agent-provocateurs in the illegal organizations.

But while doing all this, we must not forget that **in the long run** the legalization of the working class movement will be favorable to us, and not to the Zubatovs. On the contrary, our campaign of exposure will help to separate the tares from the wheat. What the tares are, we have already indicated. By the wheat we mean attracting the attention of increasing numbers of the more backward sections of the workers to social and political questions and to freeing ourselves, the revolutionaries,

from functions which are essentially legal (the distribution of legal books, mutual aid, etc.) and the development of which will inevitably provide us with increasing material for agitation. Looked at from this point of view, we may say, and we should say, to the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs, "Do your best, gentlemen. To the extent that you are seeking to place a trap in the path of the workers (either by way of direct provocation or by the "honest" corruption of the workers with the aid of 'Struvism') (5) we shall take care to expose you. But to the extent that you are making a real step forward—in a rather timid and zig-zag fashion, it is true—we say, Please, go on!" A real step forward can only result in a real, if small, extension of the field of action of the workers. And every such extension must result to our advantage and help to hasten the advent of legal societies of the kind in which agent-provocateurs will not catch Socialists, but the Socialists will catch supporters. In a word, our task is to fight down the tares. It is not our business to grow wheat in window pots. By pulling up the tares we clear the soil for the wheat. And while the old gentlemen are tending their flowerpot cultures, we must prepare reapers, not only to cut down the tares of today, but also to harvest the wheat of tomorrow.*

* The campaign of "Iskra" against the tares evoked the following angry outbreak on the part of "Rabochie Delo": "For 'Iskra' the signs of the times lie not in the great events of the spring, but in the miserable attempts of the agents of Zubatov to 'legalize' the working class movement. It fails

By means of legalization, therefore, we cannot solve the problem of creating a trade union organization which will be as little conspiratorial and as widely extensive as possible (but we should be extremely glad if the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs provided even the slightest opportunity for such a solution,—to which end we must fight them as energetically as possible!) There only remains the path of secret trade union organizations; and we must offer every possible assistance to the workers, who (as we know) have already adopted this path. Trade union organizations may not only be of tremendous value in developing and consolidating the economic struggle, but may also become a very useful auxiliary to the political, agitational and revolutionary organizations. In order to achieve this purpose, and in order to guide the beginnings of the trade union movement in the direction desired by the Social Democrats, we must first fully understand the foolishness of the plan of organization with which the Petersburg economists have been occupying themselves for nearly five years. That plan is described both in the "Statutes for a Workers' Fund" of July, 1897, and in the "Statutes for

to see that these facts tell against it and prove that the working class movement is assuming menacing proportions in the eyes of the government." (Two Congresses," p. 27). For this we have to blame the "dogmatism" of the "blind and perverted" orthodox. They obstinately refuse to see the yard-high wheat and are fighting down the inch-high tares! Does this not reveal a "distorted sense of perspective with regard to the Russian working class movement?" (idem. p. 27).

a Trade Union Workers' Organization" of October, 1900. The fundamental error contained in both these statutes is that they give a detailed formulation of a wide workers' organization and confuse the latter with the organization of revolutionaries. Let us take the second statutes since it is worked out at greater length. The body of it consists of fifty-two paragraphs: Twenty-three paragraphs deal with structure, the method of conducting business, and the competence of the "workers' circles," which are to be organized in every factory ("Not more than ten persons") and which elect "central (factory) groups." "The central group," paragraph 2 runs, "watches all that takes place in its factory or workshop and keeps a record of events" . . . . "The central group gives a monthly report to the contributors on the state of the funds" (§17) etc. Ten paragraphs are devoted to the "district organization" and nineteen, to the highly complex connection between the "Committee of the Workers' Organizations" and the "Committee of the Petersburg Fighting Union" (elected by each district and by the "executive groups"—"groups of propagandists for maintaining contact with the provinces and with foreign countries and for managing stores, publications and funds").

In respect of the economic struggle of the workers, Social Democracy—"executive groups"! It would be difficult to demonstrate more clearly how far the ideas of the economists on the question of trade unionism deviate from Social Democracy,

and how foreign to them is the conception that a Social Democrat must concern himself first and foremost with an organization of revolutionaries which shall be capable of guiding the whole proletarian struggle for emancipation. To talk of "the political emancipation of the working class" and the struggle against "Czarist despotism," and at the same time to write statutes like these, indicates a complete misunderstanding of what the real political tasks of the Social Democrats are. Not one of the fifty or so paragraphs reveals the slightest glimmer of understanding that the widest possible political agitation among the masses is necessary, dealing with every phase of Russian absolutism and every aspect of the various social classes in Russia. With such statutes not only political, but even trade union aims are impossible of fulfillment, for they require organization according to trade, and not the slightest reference is made to this in the statutes.

But most characteristic of all, perhaps, is the amazing top-heaviness of the whole "system," which attempts to unite every factory with the "committee" by a long string of uniform and ludicriously petty rules and a three-stage system of election. Bound by the narrow outlook of economism, the mind loses itself in details which positively reek of red tape and bureaucracy. In practice, of course, three-fourths of the clauses are impossible of application; moreover, a "conspiratorial" organization of this kind, with its central group in each

factory, will render the work of the gendarmes extraordinarily easy. Our Polish comrades have already passed through a similar phase in their own movement, when everybody was extremely enthusiastic about the organization of workers' funds; but these ideas were very quickly abandoned when it was found that the funds only provided rich harvest for the gendarmes. If we are out for wide workers' organizations, and not for wide arrests, if our purpose is not to provide satisfaction for the gendarmes, we must endeavor to leave these organizations absolutely loose and unformulated . . . But will they then be able to function? Well, let us examine what the functions are: " . . . . . to observe all that is going on in the factory and keep a record of events" (§2 of the Statutes). Must that really be formulated? Could not the purpose be better served by correspondence conducted in the illegal papers and without setting up special groups? " . . . . to lead the struggle of the workers for the improvement of their workshop conditions" (§3 of the Statutes). Here again formulation is not required. Any agitator with any intelligence at all can gather what the demands of the workers are in the course of ordinary conversation and transmit them to a narrow—not a wide—organization of revolutionaries to be embodied in a leaflet; " . . . . To organize a fund . . . . to which contributions of two copeks per rouble should be made (§9) . . . . to give the contributors monthly reports on the funds" (§17) ". . . to expel members who

fail to pay their contributions" (§10) and so forth. Why, this is a very paradise for the police; for nothing would be easier than to penetrate into the conspiracy of a "central factory fund," confiscate the money and arrest the best members. Would it not be simpler to issue one-copek or two-copek coupons bearing the stamp of a well-known (very narrow and conspiratorial) organization, or to make collections without coupons of any kind and to print reports in a certain agreed code in the legal paper? The object would thereby be obtained, but it would be a hundred times more difficult for the gendarmes to pick out the threads.

I might go on analyzing the statutes, but I think that what has been said will suffice. A small tight kernel, consisting of reliable, experienced and steeled workers, with responsible agents in the chief districts and connected by all the rules of strict conspiracy with the organizations of revolutionaries, can, with the wide support of the masses and without any formulation, fully perform all the functions belonging to a trade union organization, and perform them moreover in the manner desired by Social Democrats. Only thus can we secure the consolidation and development of a Social Democratic trade union movement, in spite of the gendarmes.

It may be objected that an organization which is loose to such an extent that it is not even formulated, and which has even no enrolled and registered members, cannot be named an organization at all.

That may very well be. I am not out for names. But this "organization without members" can do everything that is required and it will from the very outset guarantee the closest contact between our future trade unionists and Socialism. Only an incorrigible utopian would want a wide organization of workers, with elections, reports, universal suffrage, etc.

The moral is simple. If we begin with the solid foundation of a strong organization of revolutionaries, we can guarantee the stability of the movement as a whole and carry out the aims of both Social Democracy and trade unionism. If, however, we begin with a wide workers' organization, supposed to be most "open" to the masses, when as a matter of fact it will be most open to the gendarmes and will make the revolutionaries most open to the police, we shall achieve the aims neither of Social Democracy nor of trade unionism, we shall not escape from our amateurishness, and by our disintegration, our eternal dispersedness, we shall make the masses most open to the trade unions of the Zubatov and Ozerov type.

What should be the functions of the organization of revolutionaries? We shall deal with this in detail. But first let us examine a very typical argument of the terrorist, who (wretched man) is here too hardly to be distinguished from the economist. In the journal intended for workers, "Svoboda" (6) (No. 1), there is an article entitled "Organization," the author of which tries to defend

his friends the economist workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk. He writes:

> "It is a bad thing when the crowd is mute and unenlightened, and when the movement does not proceed from the depths. For instance: the students of a university town leave for the holidays or go home for the summer, and the movement at once comes to a standstill. Can an organization which is pushed on from outside be a real force? It has still not learnt to walk, it is still in leading strings. So it is everywhere. The students go off, and everything comes to a standstill. The best of the cream is removed, and the milk turns sour. The 'committee' is arrested, and until a new one can be formed everything comes to a halt. Indeed, one never knows what sort of committee will be set up next—it may be quite different from the old one. The first preached one thing, the second may preach the very opposite. The sequence between yesterday and tomorrow is broken, the experience of the past does not enlighten the future. And all this comes about because roots have not been struck in the depths, in the crowd, because there are not a hundred fools at work, but ten wise men. Ten wise men can be caught up at a snap; but if the organization embraces the masses everything proceeds from the masses and nobody, however zealous, can stop the cause." (Page 63).

The facts are described correctly. Here we have a fairly good picture of our amateurish methods.

But the conclusions drawn from it are for their stupidity and their political tactlessness, worthy of the "Rabochaya Misl" (7). They represent the height of stupidity, because the author confuses the philosophical and social-historical question of striking the "roots" of a movement into the "depths" with the technical and organizational question of the best method of fighting gendarmes. They represent the height of political tactlessness, because the author, instead of appealing from the bad leaders to the good leaders, appeals from the leaders in general to the "crowd." This, from the organizational point of view, is as much an attempt at retrogression as it is, from the political point of view, an attempt to replace the idea of political agitation by provocatory terrorism. I am, indeed, experiencing a very embarras de richesses *, not knowing where to begin my criticism of the confusion wrought by "Svoboda." For the sake of clarity, let us begin with an example. Let us take the Germans. I trust you will not deny that with the Germans the organization embraces the crowd, that everything proceeds from the crowd, that the working class movement has learnt to walk on its own legs. Yet, how this vast crowd of millions values its "ten" trained political leaders, how firmly it clings to them! More than once in parliament have members of hostile parties tried to exasperate the Socialists by exclaiming: "What fine democrats you are! Your movement is a working class move-

* Embarrassment caused by superfluity.—Trans.

ment only in words; as a matter of fact the same clique of leaders is always in evidence. It is always the same Bebel and the same Liebknecht year in and year out. Your delegates are supposed to be elected from among the workers, but they are just as unchangeable as the officials appointed by the Emperor!" But the Germans only smile contemptuously in answer to these demagogic attempts to set the "crowd" against the "leaders," to arouse turbid and vain instincts in the former and to rob the movement of its solidity and stability by undermining the faith of the masses in its "ten leaders." With the Germans political ideas have already sufficiently developed and enough political experience has been accumulated to make them understand that without the "ten" talented and experienced leaders (and talented men are not born by hundreds) who have been professionally trained and have passed through a long course of schooling and who work in brilliant cooperation with each other, no class in modern society is capable of conducting a determined struggle. The Germans have known many demagogues who have flattered the "hundred fools," exalting them above the "ten wise men," who have extolled the "muscular fists" of the masses, and (like Most and Hasselman) spurred them on to reckless "revolutionary" action and sown mistrust towards the tried and trusted leaders. It was only by stubbornly and bitterly combatting every demagogic manifestation within the Socialist movement that German Socialism managed to

grow and become as strong as it is. Our wiseacres, however, at a moment when the crisis within Russian Social Democracy is wholly due to the fact that we have not a sufficient number of trained, developed and experienced leaders to guide the elemental ferment of the masses, cry out with the profundity of fools, "It is a bad business when the movement does not proceed from the depths."

"A Committee of students is no good, it is not stable." Quite true. But the conclusion that should be drawn is that we need a committee of professional revolutionaries, no matter whether it be a student or a worker who is capable of training himself to be a professional revolutionary. The conclusion you draw, however, is that the working class movement should not be pushed on from outside! In your political naivite you do not observe that you are playing into the hands of our economists and amateurs. Permit me to enquire in what does the "pushing on" of the workers by the students consist? Solely in the fact that the student brings to the worker the fragments of political knowledge he possesses, the crumbs of Socialist ideas he has managed to acquire (for the main intellectual diet of the present-day student, legal Marxism, can furnish only the A. B. C., only the crumbs of knowledge). Such "pushing on from outside" can never be too excessive; on the contrary, there has so far been too little, all too little of it in our movement; we have stewed far too much in our own juice; we have bowed ourselves

far too slavishly before the elementary "economic struggle of the workers against the masters and the government." We professional revolutionaries must continue, and will continue, **this kind** of "pushing," and a hundred times more forcibly than hitherto. Because you choose so unfortunate a phrase as "pushing on from outside," which cannot but arouse in the worker (at least in the worker who is as undeveloped as you are yourselves) a feeling of mistrust towards **all** who bring him political knowledge and revolutionary experience from outside, and call forth in him an instinctive desire to resist such people, for that very reason you are **demagogues**—and a demagogue is the worst enemy of the working class.

Come now! Do not take offense at my "uncomradely method" of arguing. I am not trying to cast aspersions upon the purity of your intentions. As I have already said, one may be a demagogue out of sheer political naivite. But I have shown that you have descended to demagogy, and I shall never tire of repeating that demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class. They are the worst enemies of the working class because they arouse vile instincts in the crowd because the undeveloped worker is unable to recognize his enemies in men who represent themselves, and sometimes sincerely represent themselves, to be his friends. They are the worse enemies of the working class, because in the period of doubt and hesitation, when our movement is only just beginning to

shape itself, nothing is easier than by demagogic methods to side-track the crowd, which will realize its error only ofter it has undergone the most bitter sufferings. The task of the moment for the Russian Social Democrats therefore, should be to conduct an obstinate struggle against "Svoboda" and the "Rabochie Delo" which have allowed themselves to sink to demagogy.*

"Ten wise men can be more easily caught than a hundred fools!" This wonderful truth (which the hundred fools will applaud) appears convincing only because in the very midst of the argument you have jumped from one question to another. You began by talking, and continued to talk, of catching a "committee," of catching an "organization," and now you jump to the question of striking the "roots" of the movement into the "depths." Our movement, of course, cannot be caught just because it has hundreds and hundreds of roots in the depths. but that is not the question. As far as "roots in the depths" are concerned we are "uncatchable" even now, in spite of our amateurishness; nevertheless, we all complain, and cannot but complain, of the ease with which the **"organization"** can be caught, with the result that continuity in the movement is made impossible. And if you make the

* Let it be stated that what we have here said regarding "pushing on from outside" and the other views of "Svoboda" on the subject of organization, applies just as much to all the economists, since they have either themselves preached and defended such views on organization, or have allowed themselves to be led astray by them.

question one of catching the organization, and stick to it, then I must tell you that it is far more difficult to catch ten wise men than it is to catch a hundred fools. And this premise I will defend however much you instigate the crowd against me for my "anti-democratic" views, etc. As I have already said, in relation to organization by "wise men," I mean professional revolutionaries, whether they come from the students or from the workers. And now I assert: 1) that no movement can be stable without a stable organization of leaders to maintain continuity; 2) that the wider the masses drawn into the struggle and forming the basis of the movement are, the greater is the necessity for such an organization and the more stable must it be (for the easier it is for a demagogue to side-track the more backward sections of the masses); 3) that the organization must chiefly consist of persons who are engaged in revolution as a profession; 4) that in a country with a despotic government the more narrow we make the membership of this organization, allowing only such persons to be members who are engaged in revolution as a profession and who have been professionally trained in the art of combatting the political police, the more difficult will it be to "catch" the organization and, 5) the wider will be the circle of persons, either from the working class or from other classes of society, who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it.

I invite our economists, terrorists and "economist-terrorists" * to confuse these premises. I will here dwell on the last two only. The question as to whether it is easier to catch "ten wise men" than "a hundred fools" amounts in the end to the question we have considered above, namely, whether it is possible to have a mass organization when the maintenance of strict conspiracy is essential. We can never place a wide organization on that conspiratorial level without which the stability and continuity of the struggle against the government is unthinkable. To concentrate all conspiratorial functions in the hands of as small a number of professional revolutionaries as possible, does not mean that the latter will "think for all" and that the crowd will put forward increasing numbers of such professional revolutionaries, for it will know that it is not enough to collect together the few

* This latter term is perhaps more applicable to "Svoboda" than the former, for in an article entitled "The Revival of the Revolution" it defends terrorism, while in the article at present under review it defends economism. One might say of "Svoboda" that it would, but it cannot. Its wishes and intentions are excellent—but the result is utter confusion; and this is chiefly due to the fact that while "Svoboda" advocated continuity of organization, it refuses to recognize the necessity for continuity of revolutionary thought and Social Democratic theory. It wants to recall the professional revolutionary existence ("The Revival of the Revolution") and to that end proposes, firstly, provocative terrorism, and secondly, "The organization of the average worker," because he will be less likely to be "pushed on from outside." In other words, it proposes to break up the house in order to prevent it catching fire.

students and workers who are leading the economic struggle in order to create a "committee," but that professional revolutionaries must be trained for years from out of its own midst; the crowd will "think" not of amateurishness but of training professional revolutionaries. The centralization of the conspiratorial functions of the organization does not mean the concentration of all the functions of the movement. Because ten professional revolutionaries concentrate in their hands the conspiratorial part of the work, the active participation of the wide masses in the dissemination of illegal literature will not diminish, but on the contrary increase tenfold. Thus, and only thus, can we bring it about that the reading of illegal literature, the contribution to illegal literature, and to some extent even the distribution of illegal literature, shall cease to be conspiratorial work, for the police will soon come to realize the folly and futility of bringing the whole judicial and administrative machine to bear upon every copy of a publication which is being broadcasted in thousands. This applies not only to the press, but to every function of the movement, even to demonstrations. The active and widespread participation of the masses will not suffer, but, on the contrary, will increase from the fact that "ten" experienced revolutionaries, no less professionally trained than the police, will concentrate all the conspiratorial side of the work in their hands—preparing leaflets, working out approximate plans and appointing bodies of leaders

for each district, for each industrial quarter, and for each educational institution (I know that exception will be taken to my "undemocratic" views, but to such unintelligent objections I shall reply in detail later). The centralization of the more conspiratorial functions in an organization of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and the quality of the activity of a great number of other organizations which are based on a wide public and can therefore be as loose and as little conspiratorial as possible, as for example, workers' trade union secretary than a people's tribune, who and the reading of illegal literature and Social Democratic circles of all other sections of the population, etc., etc. Such unions and organizations to the greatest possible number and with the most varied functions are necessary everywhere, but it is foolish and dangerous to confuse them with organizations of revolutionaries, to erase the borderline between them, to still further darken the already unbelievably dim realization among the masses of the fact that for the purpose of "serving" the mass movement we require people who will devote themselves exclusively to Social Democratic activities, and that such people must train themselves patiently and steadfastly to be professional revolutionaries.

Ay, the realization of this fact has become unbelievably dimmed. From the point of view of organization, our chief sin has been that by our amateurishness we have lowered the prestige of the revolu-

tionary in Russia. A man who is feeble and vacillating on theoretical questions, who has a narrow outlook, who justifies his slackness by the elemental character of the masses, who more resembles a trade union secretary than a people's tribune, who is unable to conceive a broad and bold plan, who is incapable of inspiring respect in his enemies, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art—the art of combatting the political police—such a man is not a revolutionary but a hopeless amateur!

Let no active worker take offense at these frank words, for as far as insufficient preparation is concerned, I apply them first and foremost to myself. I used to work in a circle which set itself a great and all-embracing task; and every member of that circle suffered to the point of torture from the realization that we were proving ourselves to be amateurs at a moment in history when we might have said, parodying a well-known epigram: "Give us an organization of revolutionaries and we will lift Russia from its hinges!" And the more I recall the burning shame I used then to suffer, the more bitter are my feelings towards those pseudo-Social Democrats whose teachings "defile the calling of revolutionary," who fail to understand that our task is not to degrade the revolutionary to the level of an amateur, but to exalt the amateur to the level of a revolutionary.

(c) The Scope of Organizational Work.

B-v (8) speaks elsewhere of the "lack of suitable revolutionary forces experienced not only in St. Petersburg, but throughout the whole of Russia." Nobody, perhaps, will contest this statement. But the question is, how is it to be explained? B-v writes:

> "We will not attempt to go into the historical causes of this phenomenon; we will only state that society, demoralized by protracted political reaction and disintegrated by economic changes, which are still proceeding, is throwing up an extremely small number of persons suitable for revolutionary work; the working class is throwing up revolutionary workers who to some extent supply the ranks of the illegal organizations, but the number of such revolutionaries does not correspond with the number the times require. All the more so, since the working man, engaged as he is in the factory for 11½ hours a day, because of his very situation is able to fulfill the functions primarily of an agitator, while propaganda and organization, the procuring and reproduction of illegal literature, the issue of manifestos, etc., willy nilly fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely limited number of intellectuals." ("Rabochie Delo," No. 6, pp. 38-39).

We disagree with the view of B-v. in many respects, and especially with the words we have in heavier type, for they show particularly clearly

that B-v. who (like every practitioner* who does any thinking at all) has suffered much from our amateurishness, is unable on account of his addiction to economism, to find a way out of an intolerable situation. No! Society throws up a great many people capable of serving the "cause," but we do not know how to use them. In this respect the critical, transitional state of our organization may be described by the phrase: **There are no people and there are masses of people.** There are masses of people, because every year the working class and the most diverse sections of society throw up large numbers of discontented persons who desire to make their protest heard and, as far as lies in their power, to assist the struggle against absolutism, the intolerableness of which not everybody yet recognizes but which is being felt with growing acuteness by increasing numbers of people. Yet at the same time, there are no people, because there are no leaders, there are no political guides, there are no talented organizers capable of creating a wide and yet united and harmonious work which would find employment for all forces, even the most insignificant. "The growth and development of revolutionary organizations" has fallen behind the growth of the working class movement, as B-v. admits; but it has also fallen behind the growth of the general democratic movement among all sections of the population. (B-v. would very likely now admit that too). The scope of revolutionary work is too

* i. e. an active revolutionary worker.—Trans.

narrow compared with the wide elemental basis of the movement, it is too wrapt in the wretched theory of the "economic struggle against the masters and the government." Today, however, not only political agitators but also Social Democratic agitators must "go among all classes of the population *. Probably no practitioner will deny that in his organization there are thousands of detailed functions which the Social Democrats could distribute among representatives of the most varying classes. Inadequate specialization is one of the greatest defects of our technique, as B-v. so bitterly and so justly complains. The more the various "operations" of the general work are divided up, the more easy will it be to find persons capable of fulfilling them (who in most cases would be absolutely unsuitable for professional revolutionaries); it will be all the harder for the police to "catch" these "detail workers," and it will be all the harder to turn the arrest of a single person on some trifling charge into a "case" making worth while the sums which are spent by the government on the "Okhrana" *. As to the number of persons who are ready to lend us

* For example, an undoubted increase of the democratic spirit is recently to be observed among military circles, which is in part due to the increasing cases of street engagements, with such "enemies" as workers and students. As soon as the forces at our disposal permit, we must devote the most serious attention to propaganda and agitation among soldiers and officers with the object of creating Party "military organizations."

* The secret political police.—Trans.

assistance, we have already referred in a previous chapter to the tremendous change which has taken place in this respect during the last five years. But in order to unite all these small fractions into a single unit, in order not to disintegrate the movement itself by disintegrating its functions, and in order to inspire the executor of the small functions with that faith in the necessity and importance of his work without which he will never be got to work at all *, we must have a strong organization of experienced revolutionaries. Given such an organization, the more conspiratorial it is the

* I remember a comrade telling me of a factory inspector who was prepared to help, and in fact had helped, the Social Democrats, but who bitterly complained that he never knew whether his "information" got to the real revolutionary centre, whether his assistance was really required, and whether his small and modest services could be utilized. Every active worker of course is familiar with several such instances where our amateurishness has alienated our allies. Indeed such services, "petty" in themselves but invaluable in the mass, could be given us, and would be given us, not only by factory officials, but by officials in the post-office, the railways, the customs, in the nobles', clerical and other institutions, and even in the police department and at the court! If we had a real Party, a real fighting organization of revolutionaries, we should not treat these "assistants" so drastically, we should not always insist on precipitately dragging them into the very heart of "illegality"; on the contrary, we should be extremely sparing of them, and even specially train persons for such functions, remembering that many students could be of more use to the Party as "assistants" in official capacities than as "short-term" revolutionaries. But—I once more repeat—only a strong and stable organization experiencing no lack of active forces would be entitled to adopt such tactics.

stronger and more widespread will be the faith in the power of the Party. And in war, as we know, the important thing is to inspire belief in one's strength not only in one's own army, but also in the enemy and the neutrals. Benevolent neutrality may sometimes decide an issue. Given such an organization, based upon a firm theoretical foundation and having the Social Democratic organs at its disposal there will be no cause to fear that the movement will be diverted from its course by the numerous "foreign" elements which are attracted to it (on the contrary, we see today how, owing to our amateurishness, many Social Democrats are placing excessive emphasis on the "Credo," imagining themselves to be the only true Social Democrats). In a word, specialization necessarily presupposes, and in fact demands, centralization.

But B-v. while so excellently describing the necessity for specialization, fails in our opinion to give it its proper value in the second part of his argument. He says that the number of revolutionaries of working class origin is not enough. That is absolutely true; "the valuable information of a close observer" fully bears out our own view of the causes of the present crisis in the Social Democratic Party and of the means to cure it. Not only are the revolutionaries behind the elemental movement of the masses in general, but even the revolutionary workers are behind the elemental movement of the working class masses. This fact is glaringly confirmed by the not merely stupid, but even politically

reactionary nature of the "pedagogy" with which we are so often regaled in discussions on our duties towards the masses. It proves that our first and most urgent duty is to assist in training working class revolutionaries, who with regard to Party activities will be on the same level as intellectual revolutionaries (we emphasize the words "with regard to Party activities," for although it is necessary for the worker to attain a similar level also in other respects, it is not so easy, nor is it so urgent). Therefore our main attention should be devoted to raising the workers to the level of revolutionaries, and not to lowering ourselves to the level of the "working masses," as the economists advocate, or to the level of the "average worker" as "Svoboda" advocates, (whereby raising itself to the second stage of economic "pedagogy"). I am far from denying the necessity for popular literature for the workers and of especially popular literature (provided, of course, it be not puerile) for the more backward workers. But the perpetual intrusion of pedagogy in questions of politics and organization makes me ill. As a mater of fact, you gentlemen who are so concerned about the "average worker" insult the worker by your greater readiness to condescend than to discuss working class politics or working class organization. Speak of serious things, straighten your backs and leave pedagogy to the pedagogues, not to politicians and organizers! Are there not advanced people, "average" people and the "mass" among the intellectuals themselves?

Does not everybody know that there is a need for popular literature for intellectuals too? And is not such literature in fact being written? Imagine the writer of an article on the organization of university or high school students speaking as though it were a great discovery, of the need for organizing the "average student." A man who wrote such stuff would be laughed at, and rightly so. Give us, he will be told, your ideas on organization, if you have any, and we ourselves will decide who is "average," who higher and who lower. If you have any idea on organization of your own all your agonizing over the "masses" and the "average man" will be simply tedious. Remember that the questions of "politics" and "organization" are themselves so serious that they must only be spoken of seriously. We can, and we must, prepare the workers (and the university and high school students too) so as to be able to talk to them about these questions, but once you have started talking about them don't take refuge behind the "average man" and the "masses" and don't attempt to put us off with witticisms and phrases*.

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* "Svoboda," No. 1., article on "Organization," p. 66: "The heavy tread of the working class giant will support every demand advanced in the name of Russian Labor." Written with a capital letter of course! The same writer exclaims: "I am by no means hostile to the intellectuals, but . . ." (this is the but which Stshedrin rendered by the words "ears do not grow above the forehead!") "but it always angers me frightfully when a man utters a lot of fine phrases and expects them to be accepted because of his own beauty or other merits." (P. 62). Yes, "it angers me frightfully" too.

In order to prepare himself fully for his work the worker revolutionary should also become a professional revolutionary. Therefore B-v. is wrong when he says that because a worker is engaged in the factory for 11½ hours a day, other revolutionary functions (apart from agitation) "willy-nilly fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely limited number of intellectuals." This happens by no means "willy-nilly," but solely because of our own backwardness, because we fail to recognize that it is our duty to assist every worker who distinguishes himself by his capacities to become a professional agitator, organizer, propangadist, distributor, etc., etc. We are indeed in this respect shamefully profligate of our forces; we do not know how to preserve that which we should be looking after and developing with every possible care. Look at the Germans! Their forces are a hundred times greater than ours; yet they perfectly understand that real agitators are by no means frequently thrown up out of the "average" mass. They therefore at once endeavor to place every capable worker under such conditions as will insure his capacities receiving the fullest development and the fullest employment. They make him a professional agitator, he is encouraged to widen his sphere of activities, and to extend it from the factory to the whole industry, from one locality to the whole country. He acquires experience and skill in his own profession, he broadens his vision and knowledge, he observes at close range outstanding leaders from other local-

ities and other parties, he endeavors to raise himself to a similar level and to combine in himself a knowledge of working class circles and a freshness of Socialist conviction with the professional training without which the proletariat **cannot** conduct a determined struggle against the excellently trained ranks of its enemies. It is thus, and only thus, that Bebels and Auers are thrown up out of the working class mass. But what to a large extent takes place automatically in politically free countries must in our country be performed by our organizations systematically. A working class agitator who in any way shows talent and "promise" **should not** work eleven hours a day in a factory. We should see to it that he lives on the funds of the Party, that he is able in good time to adopt an illegal manner of existence, that he has the opportunity of changing his sphere of activities; otherwise he will not gain experience, he will not broaden his outlook, and will not be able to hold out for at most several years in the struggle against the police. The wider and more profound the elemental movement of the masses is, the more will they throw up not only talented agitators, but also talented organizers, propagandists and practitioners of the best kind (of which there are so few among our intellectuals, the greater part of whom, after our Russian fashion, are rather indolent and stolid). When we have companies of specially trained worker revolutionaries who have passed through a long course of schooling (revolutionaries, of

course, of "all arms") no police in the world will be able to cope with them, because such companies of men who are unreservedly devoted to the revolution will enjoy the unreserved confidence of the wide masses of the workers. And it is directly our fault that the workers are only too little "pushed on" along the path of professional revolutionary training, which they should follow in common with the "intellectuals"; we only too often drag them back by our silly ideas of what is "open" to the working class masses, the "average workers," etc.

In this, as in other respects, the narrow scope of our organizational work is directly and inseparably dependent upon the narrowness of our theory and our political tasks (although this is not recognized by the overwhelming majority of the "economists" and young practitioners). Worship of the elemental produces a veritable fear of departing even one step from what is "open" to the masses, a fear of rising above the mere service of the immediate and direct needs of the masses. Have no fear, gentlemen! As far as organization is concerned, we are on so low a level that the mere thought that we can rise too high is absurd!

(e) A "Conspiratorial" Organization and "Democracy."

Yet there are many among us who are so sensitive to "the voice of life" that they fear this above anything else; they accuse those who advance views such as we have here set forth of "Narodovolism," of failure to understand "democracy" and so on.

We must stop to consider these accusations, which of course "Rabochie Delo" also makes.

It is known to the author that the St. Petersburg economists accused the "Rabochaya Gazettå" of Narodovolism (which is not difficult to understand if we compare it with "Rabochaya Misl"). This by no means surprised us, for shortly after "Iskra" was started a comrade informed me that the Social Democrats of the town of X accused "Iskra" of being a "Narodovol" organ. We were of course flattered by this accusation, for what decent Social Democrat has not been accused of Narodovolism by the economists?

This accusation is based upon a twofold misconception. Firstly, our people are so little acquainted with the history of the revolutionary movement that every idea of a fighting centralized organization declaring decisive warfare upon Czarism is dubbed "Narodovolism." But that fine organization which the revolutionaries of the 'seventies possessed, and which ought always to serve as our model, was not created by the Narodovoltzi at all, but by the **Zemlevoltzi** (10), who split up into Chernoperedeltzi and the Narodovoltzi. Therefore, to regard every fighting revolutionary organization as specifically connected with Narodovolism is absurd both historically and logically, since no revolutionary movement which really intends to carry on a serious struggle can get along without some such organization. The mistake of the Narodovoltzi was not that they tried to attract all who were discon-

tented to their organization and to launch that organization into a decisive struggle against the autocracy; on the contrary, that is their chief historical merit; their mistake was that they based themselves on a theory which in reality was not a revolutionary theory at all, and were unable to bind up their movement indissolubly with the class struggle proceeding within developing capitalist society. Only a gross misunderstanding of Marxism (or a "Struvist understanding" of Marxism) could give rise to the opinion that the growth of the elemental mass movement can save us from the obligation of creating as good, in fact, an incomparably better, organization of revolutionaries than that of the Zemlevoltzi. On the contrary, the movement lays that obligation upon us; for the elemental struggle of the proletariat will not become the real "class struggle" of the proletariat until it is led by a strong organization of revolutionaries.

Secondly, many people—including apparently B. Krichevsky ("Rabochie Delo," No. 10, p. 18)—fail to understand the criticism which the Social Democrats have always levelled against the "conspiratorial" view of the political struggle. We opposed, and of course always will oppose attempts to narrow down the political struggle to a conspiracy * but this naturally does not imply the denial of the necessity for a strong revolutionary organization. For

* Cf. "Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats," p. 21, the criticism of P. L. Lavrov (Vol. 1 of the Russian edition of the collected works of Lenin.—Ed.).

instance, in the pamphlet referred to in the footnote, side by side with the argument against narrowing down the political struggle to a conspiracy there is described (as a Social Democratic ideal) an organization which is so strong that "in order to deliver the decisive blow to absolutism" it is in a position to resort either to "uprising" or "to any other form of attack *. In an autocratic country such a strong revolutionary organization, judged by its form, may be called a "conspiratorial" organization, since conspiracy is in the highest degree essential to such an organization. Conspiracy is so essential a condition of an organization of this kind that all other conditions (the number and selection of members, their functions, etc.) must be made to conform with it. It would therefore be the height of simplicity to fear the accusation that we Social Democrats want to create a conspiratorial organization. This accusation should be as flattering to every enemy of economism as the accusation of "Narodovolism."

* "Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats," p. 23. By the way here is another example of the fact that "Rabochie Delo" either does not understand what it is talking about, or changes its views "with the weather." In No. 1 of "Rabochie Delo" we find the following statement printed in italics: **"In essence the pamphlet wholly coincides** with the editorial program of 'Rabochie Delo'" (page 142). Indeed? Does the view that it is impossible to make the overthrow of the autocracy the main task of the mass movement, or the theory of "the economic struggle against the masters and the government" or the theory of stages coincide with the "Tasks." We ask the reader to judge, can a paper with such original ideas of "coincidence" possess firm principles?

It might be objected that such a powerful and strictly secret organization, concentrating all the threads of conspiratorial activity in its hands,—an organization of necessity centralized, may too easily launch into a premature attack, may thoughtlessly bring the movement into action sooner than the growth of political discontent, the degree of unrest and hatred among the working class, etc., warrant. To this we reply: abstractly speaking, of course, it cannot be denied that a fighting organization might thoughtlessly launch into an unplanned fight, which might end in a defeat which under different circumstances might not be inevitable. But in such a question we cannot confine ourselves to abstract consideration, since every engagement involves the abstract possibility of defeat; and there is no way of lessening the chance of defeat except by organized preparation for the fight. If, however, we consider the question from the point of view of the concrete conditions prevailing in modern Russia, we are forced to the definite conclusion that a strong revolutionary organization is absolutely essential, just in order to lend the movement stability and to shield it from the possibility of thoughtless attacks. Because such an organization is lacking, and because of the rapid elemental growth of the revolutionary movement, we now observe two opposite extremes (which, as is fitting, "meet"): at one time we have an absolutely bankrupt "provocatory terrorism" endeavoring "in an organization which is developing and strengthening

itself, but which is still nearer to its beginning than to its end, to call forth artificially the symptoms of its end" (V. Zasulitch (11) in "Zarya" (12), No. 2-3, p. 353). The example of the "Rabochie Delo" shows that there are already Social Democrats who are wavering between the two extremes. This phenomenon is by no means surprising, among other reasons because the "economic struggle against the masters and the government" can never satisfy the revolutionary; somewhere or other the two opposing extremes will always be cropping up. Only a centralized fighting organization, steadfastly pursuing a Social Democratic policy, and, so to speak, satisfying every revolutionary instinct and endeavor, can prevent the movement from launching into light-minded campaigns and arm it for campaigns which are likely to end in victory.

It will further be objected that the views we have here set forth are contrary to "the principle of democracy." Just as the former accusation was of specifically Russian origin, so this accusation bears a specifically foreign character. Only a foreign organization (the "Union" of Russian Social Democrats) could give the following instructions to the editors of its paper:

> "Organizational principle. In order to achieve the successful development and unity of Social Democracy it is necessary to emphasize, to develop, and to fight for the broad democratic principle within the Party organization; this is all the more essential because of the anti-demo-

cratic tendencies which are being displayed in the ranks of our Party" ("Two Congresses," p. 18).

Exactly how the "Rabochie Delo" is combatting the "anti-democratic tendencies" of "Iskra" we will see in the next chapter. For the present let us examine a little more closely the "principle" advanced by the economists. Everybody will agree we suppose, that the "broad democratic principle" implies the two following essential conditions: firstly, complete publicity, and secondly, election to all posts. It is ridiculous to talk of democracy without publicity; and the publicity must not be confined to members of the organization only. We call the German Socialist Party a democratic organization because everything in it is done openly, even the party congresses are held openly, but nobody would call an organization which is shut off from non-members by a veil of secrecy a democratic organization. It will be asked, what is the sense of advocating the "broad democratic principle" in a secret organization when the fundamental condition of that principle cannot be fulfilled? "Broad principle" is a high-sounding, but empty phrase. But that is not all. The phrase reveals a complete failure to understand the essential tasks of the moment in the sphere of organization. Everybody knows to what extent conspiracy is lacking among the "broad" masses of our revolutionaries. We have seen how bitterly B-v. complains of this, justly demanding a "strict selection of members" ("Rabochie Delo," No. 6, p. 42). And here we have

people boasting of their "sensitiveness to the demands of life," who in such a situation insist—not on the necessity for the strictest conspiracy, and the strictest (and therefore the closest) selection of members,—but on "the broad democratic principle"!

The position is no better as regards the second requisite of democracy—election. This principle is taken for granted in a country where political freedom prevails. "A person is regarded as a member of the party who accepts the principles of the Party program and supports the Party according to his ability,"—runs the first paragraph of the statutes of the German Social Democratic Party. And since the political arena is open to the sight of all, as the stage is to the audience of a theatre, everybody can learn either from the newspapers or from public meetings who accepts or who does not accept, who supports and who does not support. Everybody knows that such-and-such a politician began in such-and-such a way, passed through such-and-such an evolution, that at a difficult moment of his life he conducted himself in such-and-such a manner, and that he is distinguished by such-and-such qualities—and therefore, of course, all the members of the Party can, with full knowledge of what they are doing, elect that person or not to a given Party post. General control (in the literal sense of the word) over every step made by a member of the Party in the sphere of politics creates an automatic mechanism, which in biology is called "the survival

of the fittest." The "natural election" exercised by complete publicity, election and universal control guarantees that in the long run every active member will be engaged in his "speciality," will occupy himself with matters best suited to his powers and capacities, and that he will suffer in his own person all the consequences of his blunders, and will reveal to all whether he is capable of admitting his blunders and avoiding them in the future.

Just try to fit this picture into the framework of our autocracy! Is it thinkable in our country that everybody "who accepts the principles of the Party program and supports the Party according to his ability" should control every action of the revolutionary conspirators, and that everybody should elect persons among the latter to given posts, —when every revolutionary is obliged in the interests of the cause to conceal from nine out of ten of "the electors" who he really is? One has only to reflect ever so little upon the real meaning of the fine-sounding phrases uttered by the "Rabochie Delo" in order to realize that "broad democracy" in a Party organization which exists under the eye of the gendarmes is a foolish and dangerous game. A foolish game because, as a matter of fact, no revolutionary organization has ever, or can ever, base itself on broad democracy, however much it may desire to! A dangerous game, because any attempt to introduce "the broad democratic principle" would merely assist the police in affecting widespread arrests, would perpetuate our pre-

vailing amateurishness, and divert the active workers from the serious and essential duty of making themselves professional revolutionaries to the task of drawing up detailed "paper" statutes on systems of election. Only abroad, where we often find people assembled who are unable to find a live interest for themselves, can this "game of democracy" develop, especially among small groups.

In order to demonstrate to the reader all the objections to the noble "principle" of democracy advocated by "Rabochie Delo" for the revolutionary movement, we shall again quote the evidence of a witness. The witness, E. Serebyakov, editor of the London paper, "Nakanune" (13), has a great weakness for the "Rabochie Delo" and a great hatred for Plekhanov (14) and his followers. In its article dealing with the break-up of the foreign "Union of Russian Social Democrats," "Nakanune" took up the cause of the "Rabochie Delo" and poured a shower of insults over the devoted head of Plekhanov. All the more valuable is this witness therefore on the question under consideration. In No. 7 of the "Nakanune" (July, 1899), in an article entitled "The Manifesto of the Groups for the Self-Emancipation of the Workers," E. Serebyakov talks of the "indecency" of raising questions of "self-deception," of supremacy, of the so-called areopagus in a serious revolutionary movement. He writes:

"Myshkin (15), Rogachev, Zhelyabov, Mikhailov, Perovskaya, Figner and others, never regarded themselves as leaders and were never

elected or appointed such, although, in fact, they actually were leaders, since both during the period of propaganda and the period of struggle against the government they took upon themselves the full weight of the work, went into the most dangerous positions and performed the most useful tasks. Leadership was not a result of their wish, but of confidence in their minds, their energy and loyalty on the part of their comrades. To fear the rise of an areopagus (and if we do not fear it, why write about it) who would despotically control the movement, is sheer naivete. Whoever would pay the slightest attention to him?"

We ask the readers in what does an "areopagus" differ from anti-democratic tendencies? Is it not obvious that the noble principle of organization advocated by the "Rabochie Delo" is also naive and indecent? Naive, because nobody would pay the least attention to an "areopagus" or to people with "anti-democratic tendencies" if there were not "the confidence in their minds, their energy and loyalty on the part of their comrades"; indecent, because it is a piece of demagogic speculation on the vanity of some people, the ignorance of the actual state of the movement on the part of others and lack of preparation and ignorance of the history of the revolutionary movement on the part of others. The only serious principle of organization for the active members of our movement should be: strict conspiracy, strict selection of members and the training

of professional revolutionaries. If these conditions exist, something more than "democracy" is guaranteed, namely, complete fraternal confidence among revolutionaries. For us this is absolutely essential, since in Russia there can be no question of its replacement by general democratic control. It is a great mistake to think that because real "democratic" control is impossible, the members of a revolutionary organization remain uncontrolled. They have no time to think of the game of democratic forms (democracy within a compact body of comrades enjoying mutual confidence in each other), but they are keenly alive to their **responsibility,** knowing from experience that in order to get rid of an undesirable member, an organization of true revolutionaries will stop at nothing. Ay, we have a fairly developed Russian (and international) revolutionary public opinion, already with a history behind it, which punishes with merciless severity every abuse of duty by a comrade (and real "democracy," not the game of democracy, is a part of the conception 'comrade'!) Bear all this in mind, and you will notice the unpleasant odor of the foreign game of general elections, which hangs about the idle chatter and resolutions on "anti-democratic tendencies"!

It should be said that the second source of the idle chatter, i. e. naivete, is fed by a prevalent vagueness as to what democracy really means. In the Webbs' book on British Trade Unionism there is a curious chapter entitled "Primitive Democracy."

The authors describe how during the early days of the trade union movement the British workers thought it an essential principle of democracy that every member should take part in the management of the unions. Not only was every question decided by the general vote of the members, but offices were distributed among the members in turn. It required a long historical experience before the workers came to realize the folly of this conception of democracy and the necessity both for representative institutions and for professional officials. Several cases of trade union bankruptcy were required before the workers realized that the question of the proportional relation between contributions and allowances could not be decided by a democratic vote, but required the advice of an actuary expert. Take also Kautsky's book on Parliament and National Legislation, and you will find that the conclusions of the theoretical Marxist coincide with the lessons derived from the long practice of "spontaneously" organized workers. Kautsky is definitely opposed to the primitive conception of democracy advocated by Rittinghaus and scoffs at people who are prepared to demand in the name of democracy that "popular newspapers should be directly edited by the people"; he demonstrates the necessity for professional journalists, parliamentarians, etc., for the Social Democratic leadership of the class struggle of the proletariat; he attacks the "Socialism of anarchists and literateurs" who in their "search for effect" advocate

direct popular legislation and fail to understand that this principle can be applied in modern society only conditionally.

Those who have had experience of practical work in our movement know how widespread the "primitive" conception of democracy is among the student youth and the workers. It is, therefore, not surprising that this conception should make its influence felt in statutes and literature. The economists of the Bernstein type have included the following clause in their statutes: "§10. All matters concerning the interests of the whole organization are to be decided by a majority vote of all its members!" The theoretical economists say: "It is essential that all committee decisions should be approved by all the circles and only then become binding decisions" ("Svoboda," No. 1, p. 67). It should be observed that this demand for the wide application of the referendum is advocated in addition to the demand that the whole organization should be built upon the principle of election! We are of course far from condemning on this account active workers who had had only too little opportunity of acquainting themselves with the theory and practice of real democratic organizations. But when "Rabochie Delo" which has pretenses to leadership confines itself under such conditions to a resolution advocating the principle of broad democracy what else can we call it but simply a "search after effect"? . . . .

IV.

GENERAL TYPE OF ORGANIZATION.

(From "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Problems of Organization," September, 1902).

. . . . Now a word about the factory circles. They are of extreme importance to us: the main strength of our movement lies in the workers' organizations in the large factories. For in the large factories (and works) are concentrated that section of the working class which is not only predominant in numbers, but still more predominant in influence, development and fighting capacity. Every factory must be our stronghold. And that means that every "factory" workers' organization must be as conspiratorial internally and as "ramified" externally, and that its feelers be stretched as far and widespread as any revolutionary organization. I emphasize that here again the center, the leader, the "boss" must be a group of worker revolutionaries. We must break completely with the traditional type of purely labor or purely trade union organization, not excluding the "factory" circles. The factory group or the factory (works) committee (to distinguish it from other groups of which there should be a great number) must consist of a very small number of revolutionaries who will take their instructions and receive their author-

ity to carry on Social Democratic work in the factory, directly from the committee. Every member of the factory committee must regard himself as an agent of the committee, obliged to subordinate himself to the orders of the committee and to adhere to all the "laws and customs" of that "army on active service" which he has joined and which in time of war he has no right to abandon without the consent of his superior. The composition of the factory committee is therefore a matter of extreme importance. One of the main cares of the committee should be that the sub-committees be properly organized. I imagine the thing somewhat as follows: the committee charges certain of its members (plus, let us say, certain workers who for some reason or other cannot join the committee, but who may be very useful on account of their experience, knowledge of people, good sense and connections) to organize factory sub-committees everywhere. The commission will consult with the district delegates, arrange meetings, carefully examine the candidates for membership of the factory sub-committees, submit them to close cross-examination, if possible subject them to a test, endeavoring themselves to interview and directly examine as large a number as possible of candidates to the sub-committee of the factory in question and will finally submit a certain list of members for each factory group for the approval of the committee, or propose that authority be given to a certain worker to set up, indicate, or select a

complete sub-committee. The committee will itself determine which of these agents is to maintain contact with it and how the contact is to be maintained (as a rule, through the district delegates, but this rule may be subject to additions and amendments). In view of the great importance of these factory sub-committees, we must see to it that wherever possible each sub-committee should be in possession of an address to which to direct its communications to the C. O. (16) and have a depot for its contacts in some safe place (i. e., that the information required for the immediate reformation of a factory committee in the event of the arrest of its members should be transmitted as frequently and as abundantly as possible to the party centre, there to be kept in a safe place where the Russian gendarmes are unable to get at it). It will, of course, be understood that the transmission of addresses is to be determined by the committee according to its own discretion and the facts at its disposal, and not in accordance with some non-existent "democratic" right. Finally, it is perhaps not superfluous to mention that it might sometimes be more convenient in place of a factory sub-committee consisting of several members to confine itself to the appointment of an agent of the committee (and his candidate or substitute). As soon as the factory sub-committee has been formed it should proceed to organize a number of factory groups and circles with diverse functions and with varying degrees of conspiratorialness and definition

of organization: such as, for instance, circles for distributing and broadcasting literature (this is one of the most important functions; it must be so organized as to provide us with a real postal service of our own; not only the methods of distributing literature but also of delivering it in the homes must be carefully studied and tested, and the home of every worker and the way to it must be well learned); circles for reading illegal literature; groups for keeping a watch on spies *; circles for the economic struggle, groups of agitators and propagandists who know how to start and to carry specific leadership of the trade union movement and on long conversations in a legal manner (on the subject of machinery, inspectors, etc.), and so be able to speak safely in public, to examine people and feel how the land lies **. The factory sub-committee should endeavor to embrace the whole factory and the largest possible number of the workers in a network of circles of all kinds (or

* We must get the workers to understand that while the killing of spies, provocateurs and traitors may sometimes, of course, be absolutely unavoidable, it is highly undesirable and mistaken to make a system of it, and that our endeavor should be to create an organization which will be able to render spies innocuous by exposing them and tracking them down. To root out spies altogether is impossible, but to create an organization which will track them out and educate the working class masses is both possible and necessary.

** We also need fighting groups, in which workers who have had military training or who are particularly muscular and agile should be enrolled, to be used in the event of demonstrations, prison releases, etc.

agents). The success of the activities of the sub-committee should be measured by the multiplicity of circles, the possibility of travelling propagandists getting into contact with them, and above all, by the correctness and regularity of the work done in the distribution of literature and the reception of information and correspondence.

In my opinion, the general type of organization should be as follows: the head of the whole local movement and of all the local Social Democratic activities should be the committee. From it should proceed the institutions and branch departments subordinated to it, such as, firstly, the network of executive agents embracing (as far as possible) the whole working class mass and organized in the form of district groups and factory (works) sub-committees. In times of peace this network will be engaged in distributing literature, leaflets, proclamations and the conspiratorial communications of the committee; in time of war it will organize demonstrations and similar collective activities. Secondly, there will proceed from the committee circles and groups of all kinds necessary for serving the whole movement (propaganda, transport, conspiratorial function, etc.). Every group, circle, sub-comittee, etc., most be on the footing of a committee or branch department of the committee. Certain of them may express a direct wish to join the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (17), and, provided that the committee gives its approval, will do so, and (at the request of, or in agreement

with, the committee) will assume definite functions, will undertake to obey all the instructions of the Party organs, will be endowed with the rights enjoyed by every member of the Party, may be regarded as immediate candidates for membership of the committee, etc. Others will not join the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, but will be regarded as circles formed by Party members or associated with some or other Party group, etc.

In all their internal affairs the members of all these circles are, of course, equal among themselves, just as the members of a committee are equal among themselves. The sole exception will be that the right of personal contact with the local committee (as well as with the C. C. and the C. O.) will be possessed only by the person (or persons) appointed for that purpose by the committee. In all other respects, this person will be on an equality with the rest, who will also have the right of addressing themselves (but not personally) to the local committee and to the C. C. and the C. O. The exception indicated therefore will not be an infringement of equality, but only an absolutely essential concession to the demands of conspiracy. A member of a committee who fails to transmit to the committee, the C. C. or the C. O., the communications of "his" group will be guilty of a direct infringement of his Party duties. Furthermore, the degree of conspiratorialness and definition of organization of the various circles will depend upon the character of their functions, and the organizations will therefore

be of the most varied character (from the most "strict", narrow and closed type of organization to the "loosest," widest, open and indefinite type). For instance, the distributing groups require the utmost conspiratorialness and military discipline. The propagandist groups need to be equally conspiratorial, but with a far less degree of military discipline. Workers' groups for reading legal literature, or for discussions on trade union needs and problems require to be still less conspiratorial, and so on. The distributing groups should belong to the R. S. D. L. P. and be acquainted with a certain number of its members and responsible persons. A group for studying trade union conditions of labor and for drawing up trade union demands is not obliged to belong to the R. S. D. L. P. A group of students, officers or clerks engaged in self-education with the cooperation of one or two members of the Party, should sometimes even not be acquainted with the fact that they belong to the Party, etc. But in one respect we must absolutely demand the maximum definiteness in every branch of groups, namely, that each Party member working in these groups is formally responsible for the conduct of their affairs and is obliged to take every measure in order that the composition of each of these groups, the whole mechanism of its work and the character of that work should be known to the C. C. and the C. O. That is necessary not only in order that the centres may have a complete picture of the whole movement, but that the selec-

tion for various Party posts may be made from the widest possible circle of people, that (through the intermediary of the centre) each group may serve as a lesson for all the groups of a similar character in Russia, and that adequate warning may be given in the event of the appearance of provocateurs or doubtful persons—in a word, it is necessary from every point of view.

How is this to be done? By regular reports to the committee, the transmission of as large a number of as much of the contents as possible of these reports to the C. O. by arranging that members of the C. C. and the local committee should visit the circles, and, finally, that the contacts with the circles, i. e. the names and addresses of several members of each circle, should be transmitted for safe-keeping (and to the Party bureaus of the C. O. and the C. C.). Only when reports are regularly made and contacts transmitted may it be said that a Party member participating in a circle is fulfilling his duties; only when the Party as a whole is in a position to learn from every circle which is carrying on practical work, will arrests have lost their terror; for if contacts are maintained with the various circles it will always be easy for a delegate of the C. C. to find a substitute immediately and have the work renewed. The arrest of a committee will then not destroy the whole machine, but only remove the leaders, to replace whom there will always be candidates ready. And let it not be said that the communication of reports and contacts are impos-

sible under conspiratorial conditions: one has only to desire it and it is always, and will always, be possible to hand over (or transmit) reports and contacts as long as we have committees, a C. C. and a C. O.

We have arrived at a very important principle of all Party organization and all Party activity: while, as far as the intellectual and practical leadership of the movement and the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is concerned, the greatest possible decentralization is required, as far as keeping the Party centre (and therefore the Party as a whole), informed regarding the movement and as far as responsibility to the Party are concerned, the greatest possible decentralize is required. The leadership of the movement should be entrusted to the smallest possible number of uniform groups of professional revolutionaries who have been trained in the school of experience. The greatest possible number of diverse and heterogeneous groups of every section of the proletariat (and other classes of the population) should take part in the movement. The Party centre must always have before it not only exact information regarding the activities of each of the groups, but also the fullest possible facts regarding its composition. The leadership of the movement must be centralized. We must also, (and for that very reason, for without information we cannot have decentralization) as far as possible, decentralization responsibility to the Party on the part of every individual member and every

participant in the work and of every circle belonging to, or associating itself with, the Party. This decentralization is an essential condition of revolutionary centralization and an essential corrective to it. When centralization has been fully established and we have a C. O. and a C. C., it will be possible for every group, however small, to communicate with them—and not only will it be able to communicate with them, but regularity of communication will be established by years of experience —and the possibility of grievous consequences resulting from the chance unfortunate composition of a local committee will be removed. Now, when we are seriously endeavoring to effect real unity in the Party and to create a real leading centre, we must particularly bear in mind that the centre will be impotent if we do not introduce the maximum of decentralization both as far as responsibility to the centre and keeping it informed of all the wheels and inner wheels of the Party machine are concerned. This decentralization is only the reverse side of the division of labor which is generally recognized to be one of the most urgent practical needs of our movement. The official recognition of a given organization as the leading organization, the setting up of a formal C. C. is not enough to make our movement a real united movement, or to create a strong fighting Party if the Party centre is cut off from direct practical work by the local committees of the old type, i. e. by such as are, on the one hand, made up of a great number of persons each of which

carries on every kind of work, does not devote himself to certain definite functions, is not responsible for some special duty, never carries a well-considered and well-prepared piece of work to an end, and spends an enormous amount of time and energy in simply running to and fro—and, on the other hand, embrace a great mass of student and workers' circles, half of which are altogether unknown to the committee, and the other half are huge unspecialized, accumulating no professional experience, nor making use of the experience of others, and, like the committee itself, engaged in endless conferences about everything in general, in elections and in the drawing up of statutes. In order that the centre may be able to work properly, the local committees must be re-formed; they must become specialized and "business-like" organizations which will be capable of achieving real "improvements" in some one or other practical sphere. In order that the centre should do more than discuss, argue and wrangle (as has been the case hitherto) but really conduct the orchestra, it is necessary that it should know who is playing which fiddle and where; who has learnt, or is learning to play a certain instrument, and how and where; who is playing a false note (that is, when the music happens to go wrong) and where and why, and who must be transferred, and where to in order that the discord be corrected, etc. Let it be said openly, at the present moment we either know nothing about the real internal work of a given

committee, except from its proclamations and general correspondence, or we know about it from friends or personal acquaintances. It is ridiculous to think that this is good enough for a huge Party which is capable of leading the Russian working class movement and which is preparing itself for an attack upon the autocracy. The number of members of the committees must be cut down; each of them, wherever possible, must be entrusted with a definite special and responsible function, for which it must account; a small special directing centre must be set up; a network of executive agents must be developed to connect the committee with every large factory and works, to conduct the regular distribution of literature and to supply the centre with an exact picture of how the distribution is being carried out and of the whole mechanism of the work; and finally, numerous groups and circles must be formed which will take various functions upon themselves or unite persons who desire to work with the Social Democratic Party, to help it and to become Social Democrats, and which will keep the committee and the centre constantly informed of the activities (and the composition) of the circles. That is the way in which the St. Petersburg, and all the other committees of the Party must be reorganized; and that is why the question of the statutes is of such little importance...

Propagandist Groups.

...I now pass to the question of the propagandist groups. To organize such in every district is hardly

possible and hardly desirable, in view of our poverty of propagandists. Propaganda should be carried on by the Committee as a whole and must be strictly centralized, and my idea of the matter is therefore as follows: the Committee charges certain of its members to organize a propagandist group (which will act as a branch department of the Committee or be one of the Committee institutions). This group, making conspiratorial use of the services of the district groups, will conduct propaganda throughout the whole town, and in every locality "within the competence" of the Committee. If necessary, this group may set up a sub-group, and, so to speak, transfer certain of its functions, but only with the sanction of the Committee, and the Committee shall always and unconditionaly possess the right of detailing its delegate to each group, sub-group, or circle which has any contact at all with the movement...

By the way, while on the subject of propagandists, I should like to say a few words in criticism of the usual practice of overloading this profession with people of little capacity for it and thus lowering the level of propaganda. Almost every student without any selection is regarded as a propagandist, and the whole of our youth demand that they should "be given circles." This tendency must be fought, because it is doing a lot of harm. As a matter of fact, capable propagandists well-grounded and trained in theory are very rare (to become such a propagandist requires a fair amount of training

and accumulation of experience); they must therefore be specialized, we must put them wholly on this work and take great care of them. We must arrange several lectures a week for them; we must be able when necessary to send them to other towns, and, in general, arrange for various towns to be toured by capable propagandists. The mass of young beginners should rather be put on practical jobs; these are rather neglected in comparison with the amount of circle attending which is done by the students and which is optimistically called "propaganda." Of course, serious practice jobs also require considerable training, but nevertheless, work in this sphere can more easily be found even for "novices"...

Various Groups.

In the same way, and after the type of branch department of the Committee or Committee institution, all the other groups serving the movement should be organized—the university students and high school students groups, the groups, let us say, for assisting government officials, transport groups, printing groups, passport groups, groups for arranging conspiratorial meeting places, groups for tracking spys, military groups, groups for procuring arms, organization groups, such as for running income producing enterprises, etc. The whole art of conspiratorial organization consists in making use of everything and everybody and finding work for everybody, at the same time retaining the leadership of the whole movement, not by force, but by

virtue of authority, energy, greater experience, greater versatility and greater talent. We say this for the sake of those who usually object that too strict centralization, which is absolutely impossible to any large extent and which is even directly harmful to revolutionary work carried on under an autocratic government. Statutes give us no guarantee; that can be provided only by measures of "fraternal co-operation," beginning with the resolutions of each and every sub-group, their appeals to the C. O. and the C. C. and ending (if the worst comes to the worst with the overthrow of incapable authorities. The Committee should try to achieve the greatest possible division of labor, remembering that the various kinds of revolutionary work demand various capacities and that a person who is absolutely useless as an organizer may be invaluable as an agitator, or that a person who does not possess the endurance demanded by conspiratorial work may be an excellent propagandist and so on...

V.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP.

(From "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," written towards the beginning of 1904).

a) Par. 1 of the Statutes.

Par. 1 of Martov's Draft "Everybody who recognizes its program, works actively in carrying out its aims under the control and guidance of the organs (sic) of the Party shall be regarded as belonging to the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party."

Par. 1 of Lenin's draft: "Everybody who recognizes its program and supports the Party both materially and by personal participation in one of the Party organizations shall be regarded as a member of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party."

Par. 1 of the draft presented by Martov to the labor congress and adopted by the latter: "Everybody who recognizes its program, supports the Party materially and gives it regular personal support under the guidance of one of its organizations shall be regarded as a member of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party."

* * *

...We have set forth above the various formulae which gave rise to the very interesting debate at the

Party Congress. The debate occupied almost the whole of two sittings and ended in two personal votes (during the whole course of the congress, if I am not mistaken, there were only eight personal votes; personal votes, owing to the great loss of time they involved were resorted to only in extreme cases). The question involved in this instance was undoubtedly one of principle. The interest displayed by the congress in the debate was tremendous. All the delegates took part in the voting—a rather rare phenomenon at our congress (as at all large congresses) and also a further indication of the interest displayed by the disputants.

It will be asked, what was the crux of the question? I said at the Congress, and have since more than once repeated, that, "I by no means regard our difference of opinion (over par. 1) as being so important that the life and death of the Party depends on it. We shall not perish merely because of a bad point in the statutes." The difference in itself, although it implies differences of principle, ought not to have called forth such a division (or to speak without circumlocution, such a split) as took place after the congress. But a small difference may become a big difference if it is insisted on, prime importance is attached to it, and if every root and branch of the difference is deliberately professed. A small difference may acquire tremendous significance if it becomes a starting point for definitely erroneous views, and if these erroneous views, being reinforced by fresh differences, are

accompanied by anarchistic actions which must lead to a split in the Party.

Such in fact was the case in the present instance. The comparatively slight difference of opinion over par. 1 has assumed tremendous importance simply because it serves as the starting point for opportunist profundity and anarchist phrase-mongering on the part of the minority (especially as expressed at the league (18) congress and in the pages of the new "Iskra"). It was this difference which laid the basis for the coalition of the "Iskra" minority and the anti-Iskrists and for that marsh which finally assumed definite shape during the elections and without an understanding of which it is impossible to grasp the chief and fundamental differences which are over the question of the composition of the centres. The small error of Martov and Axelrod in regard to par. 1 was a little crack in our vessel (as I expressed myself at the League Congress). The vessel might have been bound together with a tight noose (and not with a death noose, as Martov, who during the League Congress was in a state bordering on hysteria, understood me to have said). All our efforts might have been directed towards making the crack wider and breaking the vessel, and, thanks to the boycott and similar anarchist actions on the part of the zealous Martovites, this was what actually happened. The difference over par. 1 played no small part in the question of the centres, and the defeat of Martov on this latter point led him to engage in "a struggle over

principle," which he conducted by gross and even scandalous methods (his speeches at the Congress of the Foreign League of the Russian Revolutionary Social Democrats).

Owing to such incidents, par. 1 has assumed **tremendous significance,** and we must get a clear idea of the character of the groupings which revealed themselves at the Congress during the vote on par. 1 and—what is incomparably more important—of the real nature of the **shades of opinion** which manifested themselves, or began to manifest themselves. **Now,** after the events with which the reader is familiar have taken place, the question is put thus: Did the draft as submitted by Martov and supported by Axelrod reflect his (or their) lack of firmness, and their vacillation and political haziness, as I at the Party Congress expressed it, or his (or their) inclination towards Jauresism and anarchism, as Plekhanov suggested at the League Congress (see protocol No. 102 inter alia of the League)? Or did my draft, as supported by Plekhanov, reflect an incorrect, bureaucratic, formal, pompous and un-Social Democratic conception of centralism? **Opportunism and anarchism, or bureaucracy and formalism?—so** the question **is put now, when the little difference has become a big difference! In examining the essence of the arguments for and against my draft, one should bear in mind this method of stating the question which has been forced upon us by events—I would**

say by history, if it were not too high-sounding a phrase.

Let us examine the arguments with the help of an analysis of the discussion at the congress. The first speech, that of Comrade Egorov, is interesting only because his attitude is characteristic of many of the delegates, who by no means found it easy to orient themselves in a really new and fairly complex and detailed question. The second speech, that of Comrade Axelrod, already treats the question as one of principle. It was the first speech on a question of principle—in fact, the first speech at all—made by Comrade Axelrod. One cannot say that his "professor" debut was a great successor. "I think," said Comrade Axelrod, "that we ought to draw a distinction between the conceptions Party and Organization. The two conceptions are being here mixed. Such a confusion is dangerous." That was the first argument against my draft. Let us examine it. When I say that the Party should be a sum (and not a simple arithmetic sum, but a complex) of organizations, does that mean that I "mix" the conceptions Party and Organization? *

* The word "organization" is usually employed in two senses, a wide sense and a narrow sense. In the narrow sense it implies an individual cell of the human community, however elementary its forms may be. In the wider sense it implies the sum of such cells fused into a whole. For instance, fleet, army, state at one and the same time represent a sum of organizations (in the narrow sense of the word) and a species of the social organization (in the wide sense of the word). The department for education is an organization (in

Of course not. I thereby express a perfectly clear and definiite wish, a demand, that the Party, as the advanced section of a class, should as far as possible, be something organized, that the Party should adopt into its ranks such elements as are amenable to at least a minimum of organization. My opponent, on the contrary, mixes up in the Party both organized and unorganized elements, elements amenable to leadership and elements not amenable to leadership, advanced elements and incorrigibly backward elements (corrigibly backward elements should be allowed in the Party). Such confusion is indeed dangerous. Comrade Axelrod further refers to the "strictly conspiratorial and centralized organizations of the past" ("Land and Freedom" and "Popular Freedom"): around them, he says, "there were grouped a number of persons who did not belong to the organization, but who helped it in one way or another and were regarded as members of the Party... This principle should be applied with still greater strictness in a Social Democratic organization." Here, we come to one

the wide sense of the word) and consists of a number of organizations (in the narrow sense of the word). Similarly, the Party is an organization, should be an organization, (in the wide sense of the word); but at the same time it should consist of a number of different organizations (in the narrow sense of the word). Therefore, when Comrade Axelrod spoke of differentiating the conceptions Party and Organization, he firstly overlooked the difference between the wide and narrow senses of the word, and, secondly, he entirely failed to observe that he himself had hopelessly mixed up the organized and unorganized elements into one heap.

of the central points of the question. Is it true that this principle (which allows a person who does not belong to any organization of the Party, but who only "in one way or another helps it") is really a Social Democratic principle? Plekhanov gave the only possible reply to this question: "Axelrod was wrong in his reference to the 'seventies. There existed at that time, an execellent organization with a magnificently disciplined centre; around it were gathered groups of various kinds which it had created; beyond these organizations sheer chaos and anarchy. The component parts of this chaos called themselves members of the Party, but from this circumstance the cause did not gain, but, on the contrary, lost. We must not imitate the anarchy of the 'seventies, we must avoid it." Thus, the "principle" which Comrade Axelrod wanted to pass off as a Social Democratic principle, is in fact a principle of anarchy. In order to confute this, the possibility of control, guidance and discipline outside the Party must be demonstrated; the necessity for applying the name of Party member to the "elements of the chaos" must be proven. Neither the one nor the other can be proved by the defenders of the draft of Comrade Martov. Comrade Axelrod took as an example: "a professor who regards himself as a Social Democrat and declares the fact." To finish off the idea which this example implies, Comrade Axelrod ought to have further stated whether the organized Social Democrats themselves regard the professor as a Social Democrat? Not

having answered that question, Comrade Axelrod has advanced only half his argument. In fact, one or the other. Either the organized Social Democrats regard the professor as a Social Democrat—in which case why should he not be included in one or other of the Social Democratic organizations? Only by his being thus included will the "declaration" of the professor correspond with the truth and not be an empty phrase (as many professorial declarations are) or the organized Social Democrats do not recognize the professor as a Social Democrat in which case it would be purposeless and dangerous to allow him the right of bearing the honorable and responsible name of Party member. The question therefore amounts either to the consistent application of the principle of organization, or to the apothesis of confusion and anarchy. Shall we construct the Party around the already formed and consolidated kernel of Social Democrats, such as was created, for instance, by the Party congress, and which must extend and multiply the Party organizations, or are we to content ourselves with the consoling phrase that all who lend assistance are members of the Party? "If we accept Lenin's formula," Comrade Axelrod continued, "we shall be throwing overboard a number of persons, who, although they cannot be directly adopted into the organization, are nevertheless Party members." Comrade Axelrod is himself only too obviously guilty of the confusion of ideas of which he accused me; he already takes it for granted that all who

lend assistance are actually members of the Party, when in fact this very fact is in dispute and our opponents have to prove the necessity and advantage of such an interpretation. What is the meaning of the phrase "to throw overboard," which at a first glance seems so terrible? If only members of organizations can be regarded as Party members, why cannot persons who are unable to belong "directly" to a Party organization work in an organization which is a non-Party organization, but attached to the Party? There is therefore no question of throwing anybody overboard, in the sense of depriving him of work or of preventing him participating in the movement. On the contrary, the stronger our Party organizations, consisting of real Social Democrats, will be, the less will the vacillation and instability within the Party be, and the wider, the more many-sided, the richer and the more fruitful will the influence of the Party be over the elements of the surrounding working class masses which it leads. We must not confuse the Party as the vanguard of the working class with the whole class. And, it is into this confusion, in fact, (so characteristic of our opportunistic economism in general) that Comrade Axelrod falls when he says: "We shall, of course, before all create an organization of the more active elements in the Party, an organization of revolutionaries; but since we are a class Party we must not keep outside of the Party people who conscientiously, although perhaps not very actively, associate themselves with

the Party." Firstly, the active elements of the Social Democratic Labor Party do not by any means include organizations of revolutionaries only; they also include a number of workers' organizations, which are regarded as Party organizations. Secondly, with what reason, by what force of logic, can it be deduced from the fact of our being a class Party that it is needless to differentiate between those who belong to the Party and those who associate themselves with the Party? The very opposite, in fact, should be the case: just because differences in degree of consciousness and activity exist, must differences in the degree of proximity to the Party be established. We are a class Party, and therefore almost the whole class (and in war periods, in the period of civil war, absolutely the whole class) must act under the guidance of our Party and associate itself as closely as possible with our Party; but it would be sheer sentimentality and "khvostism" * to assert that the whole class, or nearly the whole class, can under capitalism lift itself to the level of consciousness and the activity of the vanguard, its Social Democratic Party. There is not a single intelligent Social Democrat who believes that under capitalism even the trade union organizations (which are more primitive and more open to class-consciously developed sections), are

* "Khvostism" (from the Russian word "khvost," a tail), a term invented to describe leaders who allow themselves to be dragged in the tail of a movement instead of leading it.—Translator.

able to embrace the whole, or nearly the whole of the working class. We would simply be deceiving ourselves, closing our eyes to the tremendousness of our tasks, and narrowing those tasks, if we allowed ourselves to forget the difference between the front rank and the masses which are straining towards it, or to forget that it is the permanent duty of the front rank to lift ever larger sections to its own level. It is by thus closing our eyes and forgetting that the border line between those who associate with and those who belong, between the conscious and active and the mere supporters, becomes effaced.

To cite the fact that we are a class Party as a justification of organizational slovenliness and of the confusion of organization with disorganization, is to repeat the error of Nadezhidin (19), who confused the "philosophical and social-historical question of striking the 'roots' of a movement into 'the depths' " with the technical question of organization (cf. "What is to be Done," page 19 of this book). This confusion, to which Comrade Axelrod set the example, was repeated scores of times by the orators who supported the draft of Comrade Martov. "The more widely the name of Party members is distributed the better," said Comrade Martov, failing to explain, however, what advantage is to be gained from the wide distribution of a name which does not correspond with its denotation. Can it be denied that control over members who belong to no organization of the Party must

be a fictitious control? A widely distributed fiction is not beneficial, it is dangerous. "We should only be glad if every striker and every demonstrator will be able to declare in explanation of his conduct that he is a member of the Party." Indeed? Should every striker have the right to declare he is a member of the Party? By this assertion Comrade Martov at once reduces his error to an absurdity; he reduces Social Democracy to strike-making and repeats the false conclusions of Akimov. We should be glad only if the Social Democrats succeed in leading every strike, for it is the obvious and direct duty of the Social Democrats to lead every manifestation of the class struggle of the proletariat, and the strike is one of the most profound and powerful manifestations of that struggle. But we should be "khvostists" if we identified this primitive form of struggle—and trade unionism is ipso facto a primitive form with the many-sided and conscious struggle of the Social Democrats. We should be mere opportunists if we knowingly legitimized a falsehood, if we allowed every striker the right of "declaring himself a member of the Party," for in the majority of cases such a declaration would be a false declaration. We should be lulling ourselves with naive and sentimental dreams if we attempted to convince ourselves and others that every striker can be a Social Democrat and a member of the Social Democratic Party, remembering the endless disintegration, oppression and stupefication which under capitalism inevitably weighs upon exceedingly

wide sections of the "untaught," unskilled workers. It is in connection with the "striker" in fact that the difference between the revolutionary endeavor of the Social Democrats to gain the leadership of every strike and the opportunist phraseology which would declare every striker a member of the Party became most apparent. We are a class Party to the extent to which we, as Social Democrats, do in fact lead the whole, or nearly the whole, of the proletarian class, but only an Akimov would draw the conclusion from this that should in word identify the Party with the class.

"I am not afraid of a conspiratorial organization," said Comrade Martov in that same speech—but added, "for me a conspiratorial organization has meaning only in so far as it is enveloped by a wide Social Democratic Labor Party." To be exact, he should have said: in so far as it is enveloped by a wide Social Democratic labor movement. In such a form the assertion of Comrade Martov would not only have been indisputable—it would have been a truism. I dwell on this point only because from the truism of Comrade Martov succeeding orators draw the very facile and vulgar conclusion that Lenin wants "to limit the number of Party members to the number of conspirators." This, truly ridiculous conclusion was drawn by Comrade Posadovsky and Comrade Popov, and when it was seized upon by Martynov and Akimov its true character as an opportunist phrase became obvious. This same conclusion is being developed in the new

"Iskra" (20) by Comrade Axelrod in order to acquaint the reading public with the new views on organization of the new editors. At the very first session of the congress at which the question of par. 1 was discussed, I noticed that our opponents wanted to make use of this very cheap weapon and in my speech I therefore uttered the following warning: "It must not be thought that the Party organizations should consist solely of professional revolutionaries. We need organizations of all kinds, shapes and forms, beginning with very narrow and conspiratorial organizations and ending with extremely wide, free and loose organizations." This was such an obvious, self-evident truth that I thought it superflous to dwell upon it. But at the present time, when in so many respects we have been dragged back, it is necessary "to repeat the old." By way of such a repetition I will cite some extracts from "What is to be Done?" and "A Letter to a Comrade":

"...A body of leaders, like Alekseev and Myshkin, Khalturin and Zhelyabov (21) are capable of political tasks in the truest and most practical sense of the word; they are so capable because their fiery preaching meets with the response of the spontaneously awakened masses and because their bubbling energy is caught up and supported by the energy of a revolutionary class." In fact in order to become a Social Democratic party the support of a class must be secured. It is not that the Party must envelop the conspiratorial organization, as

Comrade Martov thought, but the revolutionary class, the proletariat, must envelop the Party, including both conspiratorial and non-conspiratorial organizations.

"...The workers' organizations for carrying on the economic struggle should be the trade union organizations; every Social Democratic worker should as far as possible support and actively work within these organizations... But it would be far from our interests to demand that the members of "craft" unions should be exclusively Social Democrats. The effect of that would only be to narrow our influence over the masses. Let every worker who understands that a union is necessary to carry on the struggle against the masters and the government take part in the craft unions. The very objects of the craft unions would be unattainable unless they united all who were open to even this elementary level of understanding, and unless they were not extremely wide organizations. The wider these organizations are the wider our influence over them will be. The influence will be exerted not only by the "elemental" development of the economic struggle, but also by the direct and conscious action of the Socialists in the union upon the members." By the way, the example of the trade unions is especially helpful in considering the disputed question of par. 1. That the unions must work under the "control and guidance" of the Social Democratic organization, of that there can be no two opinions among Social Democrats. But on

this pretext to give every member of a trade union the right of "declaring himself" a member of the Social Democratic Party would be sheer folly and would involve a double menace; it would narrow the scope of the trade union movement and weaken the solidarity of the workers in this sphere, and, secondly, it would open the Party to the danger of vagueness and vacillation. The German Social Democrats had an opportunity of solving a similar problem under concrete circumstances in the famous incident of the Hamburg bricklayers employed on piecework. The Social Democrats did not for a moment hesitate to declare that from the point of view of a Social Democrat, strikebreaking was dishonest, i. e. to recognize that the guidance and support of the strike was their own business; but at the same time they just as firmly refused to identify the interests of the Party with the interests of the trade unions and to lay responsibility upon the Party for the individual acts of the individual unions. The Party should endeavor to infuse the trade unions with its spirit and bring them under its influence, but in order to maintain that influence, it should firmly distinguish between Social Democrats (members of the Social Democratic Party) belonging to the unions and those who are not fully class conscious and not very politically active, and not mix up the former with the latter, as Comrade Axelrod would like to do.

"...The centralization of the more conspiratorial functions in an organization of revolutionaries will

not diminish, but rather increase the extent and the quality of the activity of a great number of other organizations which are based upon a wide public and can therefore be as loose and as little conspiratorial as possible, e. g. workers' trade unions, working class circles for self-education and the reading of illegal literature, Socialist and democratic circles of all other sections of the population, etc., etc. Such unions and organizations to the greatest possible number and with the most varied functions are necessary everywhere, but it is foolish and dangerous to confuse them with organizations of revolutionaries, to erase the border line between them. It is clear from these citations how inopportune was the reminder given me by Comrade Martov that the organization of revolutionaries should be enveloped by the wide working class organizations. I had already pointed out that in "What is to be Done?" and in "A Letter to a Comrade" and developed the idea far more concretely. Factory circles, I then wrote, "are of extreme importance to us: the main force of our movement lies in the organizations of workers in the large factories. For in the large factories (and works), are concentrated that section of the working class which is not only predominant in numbers, but still more predominant in influence, development and fighting capacity. Every factory must be our stronghold... The factory sub-committee should endeavor to embrace the whole factory—in a network of circles of all kinds (or agents). ...Every

group, circle, sub-committee, etc., must be on the footing of a committee or branch department of the committee. Certain of them may express a direct wish to join the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, and provided that the committee gives its approval, will do so, and (at the request of, or in agreement with the committee) will assume definite functions, will undertake to obey all the instructions of the Party organs, will be endowed with the rights enjoyed by every member of the Party, may be regarded as immediate candidates for membership of the committee, etc. Others will not join the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, but will be regarded as circles formed by Party members or associated with some or other Party group, etc." From the words I have emphasized, it will be clear that the idea contained in my draft of par. 1 was already fully expressed in "A Letter to a Comrade." The conditions for entry into the Party are there directly indicated, namely: 1) a certain level of organization, and 2) the confirmation of the Party committee. A page farther on I give examples of what groups and organizations, should (or should not be allowed to enter the Party and for what reasons: "the (literature) distributing groups should belong to the R. S. D. L. P. and be acquainted with a certain number of its members and responsible persons. A group for studying trade union conditions and for drawing up trade union demands is not obliged to belong to the R. S. D. L. P. A group of students, officers or clerks

engaged in self-education with the cooperation of one or two Party members should sometimes not even be acquainted with the fact that they belong to the Party, etc."

Here we have still more material for the question of "the open vizor"! While the draft of Comrade Martov altogether fails to deal with the question of the relation of Party to organization, I on the other hand, almost a year prior to the Congress, pointed out that certain organizations should belong to the Party and others not. In "A Letter to a Comrade" we already find clearly adumbrated the idea which I defended at the congress. The matter can be plainly put as follows. According to degree of organization in general, and of conspiratorialness in particular, the following categories may be distinguished: 1) organizations of revolutionaries; 2) organizations of workers, as wide and varied as possible (I confine myself to the working class, taking it for granted that under given conditions certain elements of other classes will also form part of these organizations. These two categories comprise the Party. Further, 3) workers' organizations associated with the Party; 4) workers' organizations not associated with the Party, but in fact submitting to its control and guidance; 5) unorganized elements of the working class, who partially submit to the guidance of the Social Democratic Party, at least, in the more important manifestations of the class struggle. That approximately is the matter from my point of view. From the point

of view of Comrade Martov, however, the border line of the Party is altogether undefined, for "every striker" may "declare himself to be a member of the Party." What is the use of this vagueness? the wide dispersion of "a name"? On the other hand, there is a danger—and that is that it introduces a **disorganizing** idea—the confusion of class and Party.

To illustrate the principles we have laid down let us cast yet another brief glance at the congress debate on the subject of par. 1. Comrade Broucker (to Comrade Martov's satisfaction) spoke in favor of my draft, but his alliance with me, unlike the alliance of Comrade Akimov with Martov, turns out to be based upon a misunderstanding. Comrade Broucker is "not in agreement with the whole of the statutes or with their whole spirit" and supports my draft **as a basis of democracy**, such as is desired by the supporters of the "Rabochie Delo." Comrade Broucker has not yet learnt to understand that in the political struggle it is sometimes necessary to choose **the lesser evil**; Comrade Broucker did not realize that it was useless to defend democracy as such at a congress like ours. Comrade Akimov displayed greater penetration. He placed the question quite correctly when he declared that "Comrades Martov and Lenin are quarrelling as to which (formula) will better achieve their common aim." "I and Broucker," he went on to say, "want to choose that **which will least achieve that aim. For** that reason I select that formula of Martov." Com-

rade Akimov frankly declared that he regarded "their aim (i. e. Plekhanov's, Martov's and mine, namely, to create a controlling organization of revolutionaries) as unrealizable and dangerous"; he sticks, as does Comrade Martynov* to the idea of the economists that an "organization of revolutionaries" is unnecessary. He is "full of the belief that life will penetrate into our Party, whether we bar its way by Martov's formula or by Lenin's formula." There would be no need to dwell upon this "khvostist" conception of "life" if it were not shared by Comrade Martov. The second speech of Comrade Martov is as a whole so interesting that it is worth a detailed analysis.

Comrade Martov's first argument is that the control of the Party over members who do not belong to Party organizations "is possible, in as much as the committee, having entrusted a certain function to a certain person, is able to supervise its execu-

* Comrade Martynov, it should be said, wants to dissociate himself from Comrade Akimov; he wants to show that conspiracy (here the Russian word for conspiracy is used by Lenin.—Trans.) does not mean conspiracy (Lenin here uses the word of Latin origin.—Trans.), that the difference in these words conceals a difference of meaning. What that meaning is, neither Comrade Martynov, nor Comrade Axelrod, who is following in his footsteps, has explained. Comrade Martynov "pretends" that in "What is to be Done?" (as also in the "Tasks") I did not definitely declare myself opposed to "narrowing down the political struggle to a conspiracy." Comrade Martynov wants to make his hearers **forget** that those whom I fought **had failed to see the necessity for an organization of revolutionaries**, as Comrade Akimov fails to see it now.

tion." This thesis is extremely characteristic, for it betrays, if one may say so, for whom Martov's formula is required and whose purpose it will in fact serve: intellectuals and individuals, or working class groups and the working class masses. The fact is that two interpretations of Martov's formula are possible: 1) that everybody who lends the Party regular personal support under the guidance of one of its organizations may "declare himself" (in Comrade Martov's own phrase) a member of the Party; and 2) that every organization of the Party may recognize as a member of the Party everybody who lends it regular personal support under its guidance. Only the first interpretation in fact, and it alone, gives "every striker" the right of calling himself a Party member, and that is why it immediately won the heart of men like Liber (22), Akimov and Martynov. But this interpretation is obviously nothing but an empty phrase, since it would embrace the whole working class and the difficulty between Party and class would be effaced; we can only speak "symbolically" of control and guidance over "every striker." That is why Comrade Martov in his second speech at once made for the second interpretation (although, it should be said in parenthesis, it was directly rejected by the congress when it refused to adopt the resolution of Kostich), according to which the committee will distribute functions and supervise their execution. Such a distribution of functions, will, of course, never take place as far as the mass of the workers,

the thousands of proletarians (to whom Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martynov refer) are concerned; they will only too often be entrusted to the professors, of whom Comrade Axelrod spoke, to the students about whom Comrade Liber and Comrade Popov were concerned, and the revolutionary youth, to whom Comrade Axelrod referred in his second speech. In a word, Comrade Martov's formula will either remain a dead letter, an empty phrase, or be useful chiefly, and indeed almost exclusively, to "intellectuals who are thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of bourgeois individualism" and who are not anxious to join an organization. In words, Martov's formula protects the interests of the wide sections of the proletariat; in fact, however, it serves the interests of the bourgeois intellectuals, who fight shy of proletarian discipline and organization. No one can deny that the intellectuals, as a special section in modern capitalist society, are, as a rule, characterized by individualism and by the fact that they are not amenable to discipline and organization (see the well-known articles of Kautsky on the subject of the intellectuals). Therein, in fact, this section of society distinguishes itself unfavorably from the proletariat; therein lies the explanation of the intellectuals' weakness and vacillation from which the proletariat has so often suffered. This peculiarity of the intellectuals is indissolubly bound up with their conditions of life and their manner of earning a living, which in many respects approxi-

mate to the petty buorgeois manner of existence (work in isolation or in very small groups, etc.). And, finally, it is no mere chance that the supporters of Comrade Martov's formula took the professors and the students as an example! In the dispute on par. 1 it was not that the champions of the wide proletarian struggle opposed the champions of the radical-conspiratorial organizations, as Comrade Martynov and Axelrod thought, but rather that the advocates of bourgeois-intellectual individualism came into conflict with the advocates of proletarian organization and discipline.

Comrade Popov said: "Everywhere, in St. Petersburg, Nikolaev and Odessa, judging by the statements of representatives from these centers, there are scores of workers engaged in distributing literature and carrying on verbal agitation who yet cannot be members of the organization. They can be inscribed in the organization, but cannot be members: but why cannot they be members of the organization? That remains Comrade Popov's secret. I have already quoted a passage from "A Letter to a Comrade" in which I showed that the inclusion of such workers (of which there are not scores, but hundreds) in organizations is both possible and necessary, and that many of these organizations can and should be included in the Party.

The second argument of Comrade Martov is that "Lenin thinks there are no organizations in the Party except Party organizations"... absolutely true! "I, on the contrary, consider that there

should be other organizations. Life creates and multiplies organizations far more rapidly than we can include them in the hierarchy of our fighting organization of professional revolutionaries." That is untrue in two respects: 1) "Life" creates far less active organizations of revolutionaries than we and the working class movement need; and 2) our Party should be a hierarchy not only of organizations of revolutionaries, but also of the mass of working class organizations... "Lenin thinks that the Central Committee should grant the name of Party organization only to such organizations which are absolutely reliable of principle. But Comrade Broucker knows that life (sic!) demands its due, and that in order not to leave many organizations outside the Party, the Central Committee will have to legalize them, in spite of their unreliable character; that is why Comrade Broucker associates himself with Comrade Lenin"... That is, indeed, a true "khvostist" conception of "life"! Of course, if the Central Committee consists of people who are guided not by their own opinion, but by what others say (cf. the incident of the Organization Committee), "life" will certainly demand "its due" in the sense that the more backward elements of the Party will become predominant (as had indeed now happened, the Party "minority" having formed itself from the backward elements). But no intelligent reason can be advanced which would compel an intelligent Central Committee to allow "unreliable" elements to join the Party. By this reference to

"life creating" unreliable elements, Comrade Martov patently proves the opportunist character of his plan of organization! . . . "I, however," he goes on to say, "think that if such an organization (a not quite reliable one) is ready to accept the Party program and submit to Party control we may permit it to join the Party without hereby making it a Party organization. I should regard it as a great triumph for our Party if some league of "independents" declared that it adopted the views of the Social Democratic Party and its program and joined the Party, which would not mean, however, that we would include the league in the Party organization"... Such is the confusion to which Martov's formulation leads us: a non-Party organization belonging to the Party! Just picture his scheme: the Party — 1) organizations of revolutionaries –|– 2) organizations of workers recognized as Party organizations –|– 3) organizations of workers (chiefly of "independents") not recognized as Party organizations –|– 4) individual fulfilling various functions, such as, professors, students, etc. –|– 5) "every striker." This remarkable plan is only equalled by the statement of Comrade Liber: "Our task is not only to organize an organization (!!): we can and should organize a Party." Yes, that should of course be done; but that requires not meaningless phrases like "organizing an organization" but that every member of the Party should be definitely expected to work on the task of organization in practice. To talk of "organizing a Party"

and at the same time to defend disorganization and confusion under cover of the word Party, is simply to utter meaningless phrases.

"Our formulation," says Comrade Martov, "expresses the endeavor to create a series of organizations between the organizations of revolutionaries and the masses." Nothing of the kind! This (necessary) endeavor, is not expressed by Martov's formulation, because it gives no stimulus to organization; it does not demand organization and fails to distinguish the organized from the unorganized. It provides only a name*, and in this respect we must recall the words of Comrade Axelrod: "We cannot by decrees forbid them (circles, the revolutionary youth, etc.) or individuals calling themselves Social Democrats (a sacred truth!) and even regarding themselves as part of the Party"... That is absolutely untrue! We cannot, and there is no need to, forbid anybody calling himself a Social Democrat, for directly that word expresses only a

* At the League Congress Comrade Martov adduced one more argument in favor of his draft, an argument only calculated to evoke laughter. He said: "We could point out that Lenin's formula, if taken literally, would exclude the agents of the Central Committee from the Party, for they do not form an organization." This argument was indeed received with laughter at the Congress, as the protocol records, Comrade Martov assumed that the "difficulty" he mentioned is solved only by the fact that the agents of the Central Committee belong to the "organization of the Central Committee." But that is not the question. The question is that by the example he cited, Comrade Martov plainly demonstrated his complete failure to understand the idea of par. 1 and betrayed his pedantic and indeed ludicrous method of criticism. For-

system of convictions, it does not express definite organizational relations. But we can and should forbid individuals, circles and persons "regarding themselves as part of the Party," if such circles and persons do harm to the cause of the Party by distorting and disorganizing it. It would be ridiculous to speak of the Party as a whole, as a political magnitude, if it were unable to forbid a circle "by degree" a circle from "regarding itself as a part" of the whole! Why then lay down the method and conditions for exclusion from the Party? Comrade Axelrod has patently reduced the fundamental error of Comrade Martov to an absurdity he even transformed that error into an opportunist theory when

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mally, it would be enough to set up an "organization of agents of the Central Committee," and pass a resolution including it in the Party, and the "difficulty" which occasioned Comrade Martov so much head-splitting thought would have at once disappeared. The idea of par. 1 in my draft consisted in the spur, "Organize yourselves!" in order to guarantee real control and guidance. From the standpoint of essentials, the very question as to whether the agents of the Central Committee would form part of the Party is ridiculous, since real control over them is fully and unconditionally secured by the very fact that they had been appointed agents, and are allowed to retain the post of agents. There can, therefore, be no question here of the confusion of the organized and the unorganized (which is the root error of Comrade Martov's formula). The unsuitability of Comrade Martov's formula lies in the fact that anybody and everybody can declare himself to be a member of the Party, every opportunist, every boaster, every "professor" and every "student." Comrade Martov tries to gloss over this Achille's heel of his formula by quoting examples where there is in fact no question of people who are not members of the Party declaring themselves such.

he added: "In Lenin's draft, par. 1, is a contradiction in principles of the very essence (!!) and tasks of the Social Democratic Party of the proletariat." This simply means that to make greater demands of the Party than of the class is to contradict in principle the very essence of the tasks of the proletariat. It is not surprising that this theory was energetically defended by Akimov.

Fairness demands it to be said that Comrade Axelrod, who is now anxious to pass off this erroneus formula—which shows obvious tendencies towards opportunism—as the germ of new ideas, at the congress, on the contrary, expressed his readiness "to bargain." He said: "I see that I am hammering at an open door" (and I see that the new "Iskra" is also hammering at an open door)" since Comrade Lenin is ready to meet my demands by his peripheral circles, which are regarded as sections of the Party organizations... (and not only the peripheral circles, but every other kind of workers' union. (Cf., p. 242 of the protocol, the speech of Comrade Strakhov and the quotations given above from "What is to be Done?" and "A Letter to a Comrade"). ..."There still remain the individual persons, but on that score there is room for bargaining." I replied to Comrade Axelrod that I was by no means adverse to bargaining: and I must now explain in what sense I meant it. With regard to individual persons—professors, students, etc.—I should be least of all inclined to compromise; but if any doubt arose as to workers' organizations,

I should (in spiite of the fact there is no justification for such a doubt, as I have above shown) agree to add to my par. 1 something like the following: "As large a number of workers' organizations as possible which accept the program and statutes of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party should be included among the Party organizations." Strictly speaking, of course, such an expression of wish should not be embodied in the statutes, which should be confined to legal definitions, but should find a place in explanatory commentaries and in pamphlets (and, as I have already said, long before the statutes were thought of I gave such explanations in my pamphlets); but such a statement at least would not contain the least shadow of an **untruth** tending to lead to disorganization, nor the least shadow of **opportunist** argument* or **"anarchist conception"** such as are undoubtedly to be found in the draft of Comrade Martov.

* Among such arguments, which are bound to arise in any attempt to justify Martov's formula, should be particularly noted the statement of Comrade Trotsky to the effect that "opportunism is brought about by more complex (or, is determined by more profound) causes than a clause in a statute; it is brought about by the relative level of development of bourgeois democracy and of the proletariat." The point is not that a clause in a statute may give rise to opportunism, but that out of such clauses a more of less powerful weapon against opportunism may be forged. The more profound the causes are the more powerful must that weapon be. Therefore, to cite the "profound causes" of opportunism **as a justification** of a formula which opens the door to opportunism is "khvostism" of the crassest kind. When Comrade Trotsky was opposed to Comrade Liber he understood that a statute is the "organized mistrust" displayed by the whole towards

The last phrase quoted by me in quotation was uttered by Comrade Pavlovich, who quite rightly thought **that to** recognize as Party members "persons who **irresponsibly** and arbitrarily **inscribe** themselves **in** the Party" is **anarchism.** Comrade Pavlovich, explaining my formula to Comrade Liber, said: "Translated into plain language it means that if you want to be a member of the Party you must not regard organizational relations purely Platonically." Simple though this "translation" is, it was by no means superfluous (as certain events which occurred subsequent to the congress proved), not with regard to certain doubtful professors and students, but also as far as certain genuine Party members and even leaders were concerned. With no less justice Comrade Pavlovich referred to the contradictions which existed be-

the Party, by the advanced sections towards the backward sections, but when Comrade Trotsky came over to Comrade Liber's side he forgot this and even began to plead "profound causes," "the level of development of the proletariat," etc., in order to justify our **weakness** and lack of firmness in organizing this mistrust (mistrust of opportunism). Another argument of Comrade Trotsky is that it is much easier for "the intellectual youth, organized in one way or another, to **inscribe themselves** (bold type mine) in the Party." Exactly. That is why it can be said that a formula which permits even unorganized persons **to declare themselves** members of the Party suffers from intellectual haziness, and not mine which abolishes the right of **"inscribing oneself"** in the Party. Comrade Trotsky claims that if the Central Committee "does not recognize" opportunist organizations it is solely because of the character of the persons concerned, and that once these persons are known as political individuals they cease to be dangerous and can be removed by means of a Party boycott.

tween the formula of Comrade Martov and the undeniable postulates of scientific Socialism which he so unhappily quoted. "Our Party is the conscious expression of an unconscious process." That is true; and for that very reason it is wrong to insist that "every striker" should be allowed to call himself a member of the Party; for even if "every striker" were not merely a spontaneous and elemental expression of a powerful class instinct and of a class struggle which must inevitably lead to a social revolution, but a conscious expression of that process—then a general strike would not be an anarchist phrase, our Party would immediately embrace the whole working class and consequently would immediately put an end to bourgeois society ...In order in actual fact to be a medium of conscious expression, the Party must be able to produce such organizational relations as will secure a given level of consciousness and systematically raise that

That is true only in cases where it becomes necessary to remove persons from the Party (and even then it is only half true, for a Party organization removes by means of a vote and not by means of a boycott). But it is absolutely untrue with regard to those, far more frequent, cases when to remove would be foolish, and all that is needed is to control. To secure control the Central Committee might under certain circumstances admit an organization which is not altogether reliable, but very energetic, in order to test it, or to attempt to direct it along the right path, or, through the medium of control, to paralyze its partial deviations, etc. To admit an organization under such circumstances is not dangerous, provided in general that the right of "inscribing oneself" in the Party is not allowed. Admission under such circumstances may often be useful in securing an open,

level. "If we are to adopt the path of Martov," Comrade Pavlovich said, "we must first abandon the clause which demands the recognition of the program, for in order to recognize the program it must be grasped and understood...the recognition of the program demands a fairly high level of political consciousness." We will never allow support of the Social Democratic Party and participation in the struggle of which it is the leader to be artificially limited by demands of any kind (grasp, comprehension, etc.), for the mere fact of participation helps to increase consciousness and intensify the instincts of organization, but since we have united ourselves into a Party in order to conduct systematic work, we must take care that systematic work is guaranteed.

That the warning uttered by Comrade Pavlovich on the subject of the program was not superfluous was proved immediately, at the very same session. Comrades Akimov and Liber, who secured the adoption of Comrade Martov's draft* at once revealed

responsible and controlled expression (and discussion) of false views and mistaken tactics . . . "But if legal definitions are to correspond with real relations, then the formula of Comrade Lenin must be rejected," says Comrade Trotsky, and here once more he argues like an opportunist. Real relations are not dead things; they live and develop. Legal definitions may correspond with the progressive development of relations, but may also (if they are bad definitions) "correspond with retrogression and immobility." The latter is the case with Comrade Martov.

* 28 votes were given in favor of Martov's draft and 22 against. Of eight Iskrists, seven were for Martov and one

their true nature by demanding that the program (for the purpose of Party "membership") should also be recognized only Platonically, that is that the simple recognition of its "fundamental postulates" should be required. "From the point of view of Comrade Martov," said Comrade Pavlovich, "the proposal of Comrade Akimov is absolutely logical." Unfortunately, the protocol does not state how many votes were given for this proposal of Akimov. In all likelihood, not less than seven (five Bundists, Akimov and Broucker). As a matter of fact, when seven of the delegates abandoned the congress the "compact majority" (consisting of the anti-Iskrists, the "centre" and the Martovists) which had begun to form itself around par. 1 of the statutes was transformed into a compact minority! As a matter of fact, it was the departure of the seven delegates which caused the loss of the motion to reconfirm the old editorial board—that so-called outrageous breach of "continuity of policy" in the editorship of "Iskra." The seven consisted of the Bundists, Akimov and Broucker, that is, the identical seven delegates who voted against the motives for regarding "Iskra" as the central Party organ and the

for me. Without the aid of the opportunists Comrade Martov would never have carried his opportunist formula through. (At the League Congress Comrade Martov attempted very unsuccessfully to deny this indisputable fact by confining himself to the votes of the Bundists and forgetting Comrade Akimov and his friends—or, rather remembering them only when it might count against me—as for instance, Comrade Broucker's agreement with me).

identical delegates whose opportunism, as expressed in the proposal to soften down par. 1 as far as it regarded the program, was repeatedly admitted by the congress, and by Martov and Plekhanov in particular. Imagine it, the "continuity of policy" of "Iskra" defended by the comedy which begun after the congress...

b) Opportunism in Question of Organization.

...In order to analyze the fundamental position taken up by the new "Iskra" we are obliged to examine two articles by Comrade Axelrod.

Com. Axelrod's main thesis ("Iskra," No. 57) is that "from the very outset our movement contained within itself two contradictory tendencies the mutual antagonism of which could not but develop and react on it as it itself developed." The two contradictory tendencies are summed up as follows: "In principle, the proletarian aim of the movement (in Russia) is the same as that of the Western Social Democrats." But in our country influence is brought to bear on the working class masses "by social elements foreign to them"—i. e., the radical intellectuals. Thus, Comrade Axelrod records the antagonism existing between the proletarian and the radical intellectual tendencies in our movement.

To that extent Comrade Axelrod is certainly right. Of the existence of such antagonism (and not in the Russian Social Democratic Party alone) there can be no doubt. And not merely so. Everybody

knows that this antagonism to a great extent explains the division of modern Social Democracy into revolutionary (orthodox) and opportunist (revisionism, ministerialism, reformism), which in Russia too has reached full expression during the last ten years of the history of our movement. Everybody knows, too, that the proletarian tendencies in the movement are expressed by orthodox Social Democracy, and the democratic-intellectual tendencies by opportunist Social Democracy...

Another reference of Comrade Axelrod—to the "Jacobins" is still more instructive. Comrade Axelrod must certainly know that the division of contemporary Social Democracy into revolutionary and opportunist gave rise long ago, and not in Russia alone, to "the historical analogy with the epoch of the great French Revolution." Comrade Axelrod must certainly know that the **Girondists of the modern Social Democratic movement** frequently resort to terms like "Jacobinism" and "Blanquism" to describe their opponents. Let us not imitate Comrade Axelrod in his fear of the truth; let us examine the protocols of our congress and see whether we cannot find material in them for analyzing and testing the tendencies and analogies we are considering.

First example. The dispute on the program at the Party congress. Comrade Akimov (in "full agreement" with Comrade Martov) declared: "The paragraph on the conquest of political power (the dictatorship of the proletariat), in comparison with

other Social Democratic programs, has been so cast as to permit the interpretation, and it was indeed so interpreted by Plekhanov, that the task of the leaders of the organization is to push back the class it is leading, and to sever the former from the latter." The formulation of our political tasks is therefore exactly the same as that of the "Narodnaya Volya." Comrade Akimov was opposed by Comrade Plekhanov and other Iskrists who accused him of opportunism. Does not Comrade Axelrod think that this dispute indicates (in fact, and not in the imagined whimsies of history) an antagonism between the **modern Jacobins** and the modern **Girondists** of Social Democracy? And did not Comrade Axelrod begin to talk of Jacobins because he found himself (owing to his errors) in the company of the **Girondists** of Social Democracy?

Second example. Comrade Posadovsky raises the question of the "serious differences" on "the fundamental question" of the "absolute value of Social Democratic principles." In conjunction with Plekhanov he denies their absolute value. The leaders of the "centre," of the Marsh (Egorov) and of the anti-Iskrists (Goldblat) decidedly objected to this and pretended to discern in Plekhanov "an imitation of bourgeois tactics"—**that indeed is Comrade Axelrod's idea of the connection between orthodoxy and bourgeois tendencies,** only with the difference that while with Comrade Axelrod this idea is simply in the air, Goldblat brings it into open debate. We once again ask: Does not Comrade

Axelrod think that this dispute plainly showed the antagonism which existed at our congress between the Jacobins and the Girondists of modern Social Democracy? Is not Comrade Axelrod railing at the Jacobins because he finds himself in the company of the Girondists?

Third example. The dispute on par. 1 of the statutes. Who emphasises **"the proletarian tendency in our movement"**: who insists that the worker does not fear organization, that he has no sympathy with anarchism and he responds to the stimulus "Organize yourselves!" who warns us that the bourgeois intellectuals are thoroughly imbued with opportunism? **The Jacobins of Social Democracy.** And who drags the radical intellectuals into the Party and are greatly concerned about the professors, the students, the individuals and the radical youth? **The Girondist Axelrod and the Girondist Liber.**

Comrade Axelrod defends himself very clumsily against "the false accusation of opportunism," which was openly made at the Party congress against the majority of the group "The Liberation of Labor." He defends himself in such a way that by repeatedly chanting the worn-out Bernstein melody on Jacobinism, Blanquism, etc., he simply corroborates the accusation! He is now shouting about the danger of the radical intellectuals simply in order to drown his own speech at the Party congress, which was full of expressions of concern for the intellectuals.

Those "terrible words" Jacobinism and so forth,

simply betray **opportunism.** A Jacobin who is closely bound up with the **organization** of the proletariat and **who is conscious** of his class interests is in fact a **revolutionary Social Democrat.** A Girondist who yearns for the professors and students, who fears the dictatorship of the proletariat and who grows sentimental over the absolute value of democratic demands is in fact an **opportunist.** Only an opportunist can today still see danger in conspiratorial organizations when the idea of narrowing the political struggle down to a conspiracy has been a thousand times exploded in our literature, and long ago rejected and cast out by life itself, and when the cardinal importance of mass political agitation has been affirmed and re-affirmed **ad nauseum.** The real cause of the fear of conspiracy and of Blanquism is to be attributed not to the characteristics revealed in the practice of the movement (as Bernstein & Co. have been long and earnestly trying to prove), but to the Girondist timidity of the bourgeois intellectuals, whose psychology has so often betrayed itself among present-day Social Democrats. Nothing can be more comic than the desperate attempts made by the new "Iskra" to utter **a new word** (which has in fact been already uttered a hundred times) by way of warning against the tactics of the French revolutionary conspirators of the 'forties and 'sixties...

...Forward slowly, zig-zag fashion! (23). We have already heard this **motif** in connection with the discussion on tactics; we now hear it again in

connection with the discussion on organization. "Khvostism" in questions of organization follows naturally and inevitably from the psychology of the anarchist individualist, when he attempts to elevate his (perhaps, at first purely casual) anarchist tendencies to a system of ideas, to particular differences of opinion on question of principle. We saw the beginning of this anarchism at the League Congress, and in "Iskra" we observe the attempt to elevate it to a system of ideas. These attempts strikingly bear out the opinion already expressed at the Party congress regarding the difference in the point of view of a bourgeois intellectual who has joined the Party and a proletarian who is conscious of his class interests. For instance, "Practitioner," who writes in the "Iskra," and with whose profundity we are already familiar, accuses me of conceiving the Party "as a huge factory" headed by a director in the shape of the Central Committee. "Practitioner" does not even suspect that the "terrible word" he here employs at once betrays the psychology of a bourgeois intellectual who is acquainted neither with the practice nor the theory of proletarian organization. To some people a factory is simply a bugbear, where as it is, in fact, that highest form of capitalist cooperation which has united and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organize, and placed it at the head of all sections of the toiling and exploited population. It is Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat educated by capitalism, who has taught and still teaches the

wavering intellectuals the difference between the exploiting side of the factory (a discipline based on mortal fear of starvation) and its organizing side (a discipline based upon common labor united by the conditions of highly developed technical production). Discipline and organization, which come so hard to the bourgeois intellectual, are, thanks to the factory "school," acquired very easily by the proletariat. Mortal fear of this school and utter failure to comprehend its organizing value are characteristic of the habits of thought which reflect petty-bourgeois conditions of existence, and which give rise to the species of anarchism which the German Social Democrats call "Edelanarchismus," i. e., the anarchism of the "well-born" person—noble anarchism. Noble anarchism is specially characteristic of the Russian nihilist. To him the Party organization appears to be a monstrous "factory," the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority he regards as "enslavement" (see Axelrod's article); the division of labor under the guidance of the centre wrings from him a tragi-comic outcry against the transformation of men into "wheels and bolts" (and what is to him particularly monstrous is the transformation of editors into contributors); reference to the Party statutes on organization he meets with a contemptuous grimace and a deprecatory remark (addressed to "the formalists") to the effect that perhaps statutes are altogether unnecessary.

It is almost unbelievable, but nevertheless a fact,

that this very illuminating remark was made about me by Comrade Martov in No. 58 of the "Iskra," where for greater emphasis he refers to my own words in "A Letter to a Comrade." What is it but "noble anarchism" and "khvostism" when examples from the period of disorganization, the period of the circles, are used in the period of the existence of a Party to **justify** the retention and glorification of anarchy and the circle spirit.

Why did we not need statutes before? Because the Party consisted of individual circles ununited by any organized bond. Transfer from one circle to another was a matter solely for the "sweet will" of the individual concerned, and in no way represented the expression of the will of the whole. Disputed questions within the circles were settled not in accordance with statutes but "by conflict and threats of resignation": so I expressed it in "A Letter to a Comrade," basing myself on my own experience of a number of circles, and, in particular, of our own editorial board of six. During the epoch of the circles this phenomenon was natural and inevitable, but nobody thought of praising it, or regarded it as ideal; everybody complained of the disintegration, everybody suffered from it and longed for the fusion of the circles and the formation of a Party organization. And now that this fusion has taken place we are being forced back and regaled with anarchist phrases masquerading as profound thoughts on organization! To those accustomed to the dressing-gown and slippers of

the cosy family circle, formal statutes may appear narrow, hampering, burdensome, degrading, bureaucratic, enslaving and detrimental to the free "process" of the struggle of ideas. Noble anarchism cannot understand that formal statutes are required just in order to replace the narrow bonds of the circles by the broad bond of the Party. The bond within a circle, or between circles, did not require formulation, and indeed could not be formulated, for it was based either upon friendship, or upon blind and undefined "confidence." The Party bond can be based on neither; it must be based upon formal, "bureaucratic" (from the point of view of the undisciplined intellectual) statutes, the strict adherence to which can alone guarantee us against the idiosyncracies, caprices and slipshod methods of the circles, which are called the free "process" or the struggle of ideas.

The editors of the new "Iskra" think they are playing a trump card against Alexandrov when they make the very edifying remark that "confidence is a delicate thing, which cannot be hammered into hearts and heads" (No. 56, Supplement). The editors fail to see that to talk thus of categories of confidence, of naked confidence, only serves once more to betray their noble anarchism and organizational "khvostism." When I was a member of a circle only, whether of the editorial six or the "Iskra" organization, I was entitled to justify my disinclination to work with X, say, purely on the grounds of a vague and undefined mistrust. But

now that I am member of the Party I have no right to excuse myself merely on the ground of vague mistrust, for that would simply be opening the door wide to the caprices and idiosyncracies of the old circle spirit; I am obliged to give a formal reason for my "trust" or "mistrust," that is, to justify myself by a formally adopted postulate in our program, tactics or statutes; I am obliged not to confine myself to a simple "I trust" or "I mistrust," but to recognize the answerability of my decisions, and indeed of the decisions of every section of the Party, before the whole Party; I must pursue a formally prescribed manner of expressing my "mistrust," and of advocating the views or wishes that flow from this mistrust. We have already raised ourselves from the circle spirit, of unreasoned "confidence" to the Party spirit, which demands adherence to reasoned and formally prescribed methods of expressing and testing confidence. But the editors want to drag us back and dub their "Khvostism" new views on organization!

See what our so-called Party editors say regarding literature groups which demand representation on the editorial board. "We shall not get indignant, we shall not talk about discipline," say our noble anarchists who are accustomed to regard discipline rather disparagingly; we shall either, they say, 'come to an understanding' (sic!) with the group if it is a serious one, or simply laugh at its demands."

Observe the noble air they adopt towards vulgar

"factory formalism!" We have here in fact a revival of the phraseology of the circles addressed to the Party by the editorial board, who feel that they represent not a Party organization but a remnant of a former circle. The inner falsity of this position must inevitably lead to anarchist profundity of thought which elevates the disintegration which they phrasically declare to have already outlived to the level of a principle of Social Democratic organization. No hierarchy of lower and upper Party organizations is required—to the noble anarchist such a hierarchy is a bureaucratic invention (see Axelrod's article), no subordination of the part to the whole, no "formal democratic" definition of what are Party ways of "agreeing" or disagreeing—let us only dignify the old slipshod methods of the circles with phrases about the so-called "true Social Democratic" methods of organization.

Here is where the proletarian who has passed through the "school" of the factory can and must teach a lesson to the anarchist individualist. The class conscious worker long ago came out of his swaddling clothes when he learned to fight shy of the intellectual as such. The class-conscious worker knows how to value the richer store of knowledge, that wider political outlook which he finds among the Social Democratic intellectuals. But as a real Party is developed the class conscious worker must learn to distinguish between the psychology of the fighter in the proletarian army from the psychology of the bourgeois intellectual who makes a brave

show of anarchist phrases; he must learn to demand that Party duties should be fulfilled not by the rank and file alone, but also by "the people above"; he must learn to treat "khvostism" in questions of organization with the same contempt with which he treats "khvostism" on questions of tactics.

The final characteristic peculiarity of the position adopted by "Iskra" on questions of organization, namely, its defense of autonomism as against centralism, is also associated with Girondism and noble anarchism. A similar principle (if there is any principle at all *) lies behind the outcry against bureaucracy and autocracy, the complaints regarding the "undeserved neglect of the non-Iskrists" (who at the congress defended autonomy), the comic outcries against the demand for "unconditional obedience," the bitter lament against "pomposity," etc., etc. The opportunist wing of every organization always defends and justifies backwardness of every kind, whether on questions of program, tactics or organization. The new "Iskra's" defense of organizational backwardness (Khvostism) is closely bound up with its defense of autonomism. Autonomism generally has already been discredited by the three-year's advocacy of it by the old "Iskra," which makes it all the more shameful for the new "Iskra" to come out openly in its favor. It still assures us of its sympathy for centralism, but the only indication of it it gives is to

* I here, as in this paragraph generally, leave the laments over "co-option" out of consideration.

write the word centralism in italics. In fact, the slightest critical examination of the "principles" of the "true Social Democratic" (not anarchistic?) quasi-centralism of the new "Iskra" will reveal the autonomist point of view at every step. Is it now not clear to everybody that on questions of organization Martov and Axelrod have gone to the side of Akimov? Have they not themselves solemnly admitted this by their famous complaint against "the undeserved neglect of the non-Iskrists"? and did not Akimov and his friends defend autonomism at our Party congress?

It was autonomism (if not anarchism) which Martov and Axelrod advocated at the League Congress, when with ludicrous zeal they tried to prove that the part should not be subordinated to the whole, that the Party should be autonomous in determining its relations to the whole and that the statutes of the Foreign League, in which these relations are formulated, had been drawn up against the will of the majority of the Party and of the Party centre. It is autonomism that Comrade Martov is now openly defending in the pages of the new "Iskra" (No. 60) on the question of the introduction of members into the local committees by the Central Committees. I shall not speak of the childish sophistries with which Comrade Martov defended autonomism at the League Congress and in the new "Iskra." *

* While he analyzes several clauses of the statutes, Comrade Martov overlooks the clause which deals with the relations of the whole to the part. The Central Committee "dis-

What I want here to draw attention to is the unmistakeable tendency to defend autonomism as against centralism which is a fundamental feature of opportunism in question of organization.

Almost the only attempt which has been made to analyze the conception of bureaucracy is the contrast drawn by the new "Iskra" (No. 53) between "the formal democratic principle" (heavy type by the author) and "the formal bureaucratic principle." This contrast (which unfortunately is as little developed and explained as the reference to the non-Iskrists) contains a germ of truth. Bureaucracy versus democracy means centralism versus autonomism; it is the organization principle of revolutionary Social Democracy as against the organization principle of the Social Democratic opportunists. The latter endeavors to proceed from the bottom upwards, and therefore, wherever possible, insists upon autonomism and "democracy" and even (in the case of the over-zealous) goes to the extent of anarchism. The former strives to proceed from the top downwards, insisting on the extension of the rights and authority of the centre over the parts. During the epoch of disintegration and of the circles, the peak from which revolutionary Social Democracy could attempt to proceed in an organized fashion had to be one of the circles—the most

tributes the forces of the Party" (par. 6). Can forces be distributed if members are not transferred from one committee to another? One is almost ashamed to dwell on these elementary truths.

influential on account of its activities and its consistent revolutionary policy (in our case the "Iskra" organization). During the period of the restoration of the Party as an actual unity in which the obsolete circles have been fused, the peak is the Party congress, the supreme organ of the Party; the congress, as far as is possible, unites all the representatives of the active organizations, and by appointing the central institutions (frequently consisting of persons acceptable more to the advanced elements of the Party than to the backward, to the revolutionary wing rather than to the opportunist wing) makes them the peak until the following congress. Such, at least, is the case with the European Social Democrats, although little by little, not without difficulty, not without disputes and haggling, this practice, so cordially disliked by the anarchists, is beginning to spread to the Asiatic Social Democrats too.

It is extremely interesting to note that the fundamental features I have described as peculiar to opportunism in questions of organization (autonomism, noble or intellectual anarchism, "khvostism" and Girondism) are to be observed mutatis mutandi in every Social Democratic Party throughout the world in which there happen to be revolutionary and opportunist wings (and where is this not the case?). This came out especially clearly recently in the case of the German Social Democratic Party when the election defeat in 20 Saxon constituencies

(the so-called Göhre* incident) brought the principles of Party organization to the fore.

The zeal of the German opportunists was heightened by the question of principle which was raised in connection with this incident. Göhre (a former clergyman, author of a fairly well-known book entitled "Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter" and one of the "heroes" of the Dresden Congress) was himself an avowed opportunist, and the organ of the consistent German opportunists, the "Sozialistische Monatsheft" (the "Socialist Monthly") immediately took up the cudgels in his defense.

Opportunism on the question of program is naturally associated with opportunism on the question of tactics and opportunism on questions of organization. It was Comrade Wolfgang Heine who took it upon himself to expound the "new" point of view. To give the reader some idea of the character of this typical intellectual, who when he joined the Social Democrats brought his opportunist habits of thought with him, it is enough to mention that Comrade Wolfgang Heine is somewhat smaller than

* On June 16th, 1903, Göhre was elected to the Reichstag from 15 Saxon constituencies, but after the Dresden Congress resigned his mandate. The electors of 20 constituencies which fell vacant after the death of Rosenov wanted to put Göhre forward as candidate. The Central Committee of the Party and the Saxon Central Agitation Committee were opposed to this, and although they did not have the right of formally forbidding the candidature of Göhre, succeeded in getting him to refuse to stand. At the elections the Social Democrats were defeated.

a German Comrade Akimov and somewhat greater than a German Comrade Egorov.

Comrade Wolfgang Heine took up the campaign in the "Socialist Monthly" with no less pomp than Comrade Axelrod in the new "Iskra." "Democratic Notes on the Göhre Incident"—how precious is the title alone (Sozialistische Monatsheft," No. 4). The contents are no less weighty. Comrade W. Heine protests against "the attempt against the autonomy of the electoral constituency," he insists upon "the democratic principle," he objects to the interference of "an appointed authority" (i. e. the Central Committee of the Party) in the free election of the delegates of the people. It is not only a question of a chance incident, Comrade W. Heine informs us, but of a "general tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism within the Party," a tendency which has long made itself felt, but which has now become especially dangerous. It must be "recognized in principle that the local Party organizations are the shapers of their own life (a plagiarism on the brochure of Comrade Martov, "Once More in the Minority"). One "must not get used to the idea that all important political decisions are to proceed from one centre"; the Party must be warned against "the doctrinaire policy which has lost all contact with life" (appropriated from the speech of Comrade Martov at the Party congress to the effect that "life demands its own"). ". . . If we probe to the root of things," Comrade W. Heine goes on to broaden his argument, "and forget

personal differences, which here, as everywhere have played no little part, we observe in the agitation against the **revisionists** the obvious mistrust of official persons towards 'outsiders' (W. Heine has apparently not read the pamphlet on 'The State of Siege,' and therefore resorts to the anglicism 'outsiders'), the mistrust of tradition towards the unusual, of the impersonal institution towards the individual (c. p. the resolution of Axelrod at the League Congress on the suppression of personal initiative); in a word, the same tendency which we described above as a tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism within the Party."

The conception "discipline" arouses in Comrade W. Heine no less noble disgust than in Comrade Axelrod. "The revisionists," he writes, "have been accused of lack of discipline because they wrote in the 'Sozialistische Monatsheft,' an organ which was even denied the character of a Social Democratic journal because it was not **under the control of the party.** The very attempt to narrow down the meaning of 'Social Democrat,' the very demand for **discipline** in the sphere of mental production, where freedom must unconditionally reign, (remember, the struggle of ideas is a process, while forms of organization are only forms) is evidence of the tendency towards bureaucracy and the suppression of individuality." And Comrade Heine continues to thunder at great length in every variety of tone against this hateful tendency to create "a great all-embracing organization, the greatest possible cen-

tralization, **uniform** tactics, a **uniform** theory"; he storms against the demand for "unconditional obedience," "blind subordination," "simplified centralism," etc., etc. **a la** Axelrod.

The dispute started by W. Heine spread; and since in the German Party it was not fouled by wranglings over the question of co-option, and since the German Akimovs show their faces openly at Party congresses and in their own journals, the dispute developed into an analysis of the fundamental tendencies of orthodoxy and revisionism on the question of organization. K. Kautsky came forward as one of the representatives of the revolutionary tendency (and was of course accused, as he would be with us, of "dictatorialness," "inquisitorialness" and similar frightful things) in the "Neue Zeit," 1904, No. 8, with an article entitled "Wahlkreis und Partei" (The Electoral Constituency and the Party). "The article of W. Heine," he declared, "is typical of the tenor of thought of the whole revisionist movement." Not in Germany alone, but also in France and Italy are the opportunists heart and soul in favor of autonomism, the enfeebling of Party discipline and its total abolition, and everywhere does their tendency lead to **disorganization,** to the distortion of the "democratic principle" into **anarchism.** "Democracy does not mean the absence of rule," K. Kautsky tells the opportunists on the subject of organization; "democracy does not mean anarchy, but the rule of the masses over those they appoint, in distinction to

other forms of government, in which the pretended servants of the people are in fact their rulers." K. Kautsky analyzes at length the disorganizing influence exercised by opportunist autonomism in various countries. He points out that the adhesion of "a mass of bourgeois elements * to Social Democracy is reinforcing opportunism, autonomism and the tendency to ignore discipline; he reminds us again and again that "organization is the weapon which will emancipate the proletariat," and that "organization is the proletariat's own weapon in the class struggle."

Opportunism is not so strong in Germany as it is in France and Italy. "Autonomist tendencies with us have so far led to nothing more than rather pathetic declamations against the dictators and grand inquisitors, against excommunication and heresy hunting and to endless wrangling and haggling, which would lead to endless conflicts if the other side replied."

It is not surprising that in Russia, where opportunism in the Party is weaker than in Germany, the autonomist tendencies have developed fewer ideas and more "pathetic declamations" and wrangling.

No wonder therefore that Kautsky comes to the following conclusion: "On no other question perhaps is revisionism in all countries, in spite of its manifold forms and colors, so uniform as on the question of organization." The fundamental tendencies of orthodoxy and revisionism K. Kautsky describes with the aid of "a terrible word"—bureaucracy versus democracy. "We are told," writes K. Kautsky, "that to allow the Party leadership to influence the selection of a candidate (to parliament) by the local electoral districts is a shameful attack on the democratic principle, which demands that all political activity should proceed from the bottom upwards, by means of the independent action of the masses, and not from above downwards, by means of bureaucracy. . . . But if there is any real democratic principle, it is that the majority should dominate over the minority, and not vice versa. . . ." The election of members of parliament by any individual constituency is an important question for the Party as a whole; it must influence the selection of the candidates even though it be through the appointed representatives of the Party (Vertrauensmänner). "Whoever thinks this too bureaucratic or centralized, let him try to suggest that candidates should be appointed by the direct vote of all the members of the Party (Sämmtliche Parteigenossen). Since that is impossible, it is no use complaining that there is too little democracy when the function we have referred to, like many others affecting the whole Party, are carried out by one or more Party instances." According to "customary right" in the German Party, the indi-

* Kautsky cites Jaures as an example. The more these people incline towards opportunism, the more "must Party discipline appear to them to be an intolerable infringement of their free personality."

vidual electoral districts used, even formerly, to "come to a friendly agreement" with the Party leadership as to what candidate was to be put forward. But the Party has already become too large for this tacit customary right. A customary right ceases to be a right when it ceases to be recognized as something self-understood, when its limits, and even its very existence, is disputed. It then becomes absolutely essential to formulate that right definitely, to codify it, to proceed to "an exact statutory formulation* (**statuarische Festelgung**) and to introduce greater strictness (**grössere Straffheit**) of organization."

We here see under other circumstances the same struggle of the opportunist and the revolutionary Party wings on the question of organization, the same conflict between autonomism and centralism and democracy and "bureaucracy," between the tendency to undermine strictness and the tendency to increase strictness of organization and discipline, between the psychology of the unstable wavering intellectual and that of the tried proletarian, between intellectual individualism and proletarian solidarity. It will be asked, what was the attitude of **bourgeois democracy** towards this conflict—not that bourgeois democracy which capricious history

* It is extremely instructive to contrast this remark of Kautsky's regarding the replacement of a tacitly recognized customary right by a right laid down in the statutes with that "transformation" which our Party in general, and the Party editorial board in particular, have been passing through since the Party Congress.

promised some day to reveal to Comrade Axelrod in secret, but the real, genuine, bourgeois democracy which in Germany has no less learned and observant representatives than our gentlemen of the "Osvobozhdenie." German bourgeois democracy immediately reacted to the new dispute and—like Russian bourgeois democracy and bourgeois democracy everywhere—at once took up the cudgels in defense of the opportunist wing of the Social Democratic Party. The prominent organ of the German Stock Exchange capital, the "Frankfurter Zeitung," printed a weighty leader (see "Frankfurter Zeitung," 1904, April 7, No. 97, Evening Edition), from which it is clear that unconscious plagiarisms of Axelrod are becoming a veritable disease with the German press. The terrible democrats of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange set out to denounce "absolutism" in the Social Democratic Party, the "Party dictatorship," the "autocratic rule of the Party authorities," the "excommunications," which attempt to "punish the whole of revisionism" (remember the "false accusations of opportunism"), the demand for "blind obedience," "deadly discipline," the demand for "lackey-like subordination," and the transformation of the members of the Party into "political corpses" (this is rather stronger than screws and wheels!) "Every personal peculiarity," exclaim the knights of the bourse, indignant at the anti-democratic habits of the Social Democrats, "every manifestation of individuality must be persecuted, for it was threatened to lead to a state of

affairs such as exists in France, to Jauresism and Millerandism, as Zinderman declared." Zinderman reported on this question at the Party Congress of the Saxon Social Democrats.

To the extent, therefore, that there is any fundamental idea at all in the new phrases of the new "Iskra" on the question of organization, there can be no doubt that that idea is an opportunist idea. This conclusion is borne out by the whole analysis of our Party Congress, which split up into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, and by the example of all European Social Democratic Parties, in which opportunism on the subject of organization is expressed by the same tendencies, by the same accusations, and very often by the same words. Of course, the national peculiarities of the various Parties, and the differences in political conditions in the various countries, are not without their influence, so that German opportunism is as unlike French opportunism as French opportunism is as unlike Italian opportunism and Italian opportunism is unlike Russian opportunism. But the similarity in the fundamental division of all Parties into revolutionary and opportunist wings, the similarity in the manner of thought and the tendencies of opportunism on the subject of organization, stand out clearly in spite of difference of conditions.* The

* There cannot be the slightest doubt today that the old division of the Russian Social Democrats on questions of tactics into economists and politicians was similar to the division of the whole international Social Democratic movement into opportunists and revolutionaries, although the difference between Comrades Martynov and Akimov on the one hand, and Comrades von Vollmar and von Elm, or Jaures and Millerand, on the other, is very great. Similarly there can be no doubt as to the identity of the fundamental division on the question of organization, in spite of the tremendous difference of conditions prevailing in the politically unfranchised and the politically free countries. It is highly characteristic that the editors of the new "Iskra," who are such sticklers for principle, while they dealt briefly with the dispute between Kautsky and Heine (No. 64) timorously avoided the question of the fundamental tendencies of every kind of opportunism and every kind of orthodoxy on the question of organization.

existence of large numbers of representatives of the radical intellectuals in the ranks of our Marxists and Social Democrats have made, and still make, the opportunism to which their psychology gives rise inevitable in the most varied spheres and in the most varied forms. We fought opportunism on the fundamental questions of our philosophy and on the question of the program; and the utter divergence of aims led inevitably to an irrevocable split between the Social Democrats and the liberals who have spoilt our legal Marxism. We fought opportunism on questions of tactics; and our divergence from Corms, Krichevsky and Akimov on these less important questions was, of course, only temporary and did not lead to the formation of different Parties. We must now fight the opportunism of Martov and Axelrod on questions of organization; they are of course, still less fundamental than the questions of program or tactics, but they at present occupy the forefront of our Party life.

When we speak of fighting opportunism we must not lose sight of the characteristic features of mod-

ern opportunism as they manifest themselves in each and every sphere, namely, its indefiniteness, vagueness, and elusiveness. The opportunist, by his very nature, tends to avoid a definite and final solution of a question; he is always seeking for alternatives; he writhes like an eel between mutually exclusive points of view; he tries to "be in agreement" with all sides, but expresses his disagreements in amendments, doubts, pious and innocent wishes, etc., etc. An opportunist on questions of program, like Comrade Ed. Bernstein, "is in agreement" with the revolutionary program of the Party, and although he would apparently like to see it "radically reformed," he regards such reforms as untimely, inconvenient, and not important as an understanding on "the general principles" "of criticism" (consisting chiefly of uncritical borrowings of principles and phrases from bourgeois democracy). An opportunist on questions of tactics like Comrade von Vollmar, is also in agreement with the old tactics of revolutionary Social Democracy, and also confines himself to lengthy declamations, to corrections, to witticisms, and never proposes definite "ministerial" tactics. Opportunists on questions of organization also, like Comrades Martov and Axelrod, although they have been directly called upon to do so, have so far produced no definite theses setting forth principles which can be "embodied in statutory form"; they also would have liked, most certainly would have liked, "the radical reform" of our statutes of organization ("Iskra," No.

58, page 2, col. 3) but they would prefer at first to deal with "general questions of organization" (for the real radical form of our statutes, which in spite of par. 1 is still centralistic, if carried out in the spirit of the new "Iskra" would certainly lead to autonomism, and Comrade Martov, of course, does not like to admit his tendency to autonomism in principle, even to himself). Their "fundamental" position on the question of organization therefore displays all the colors of the rainbow: innocent and pathetic declamations against autocracy and bureaucracy, blind subordination, and screws and wheels, predominate—declamations so innocent that it is difficult to distinguish what is really fundamental in them and what is really concerned with co-option. But the deeper we go into the forest, the thicker the trees become. Attempts to analyze and define exactly the so much detested "bureaucratism" inevitably leads to autonomism, to the justification of backwardness, to "khvostism," to Girondist phrasemongering. Finally, the only, really definite principle in practice, and therefore the one that stands out most clearly (for practice always precedes theory) is the principle of anarchism. Ridicule of discipline — autonomism — anarchism, that is the ladder upon which opportunism on questions of organization ascends and descends, leaping from step to step and dexterously avoiding a definite formulation of its principles.* The same grada-

* Those who remember the discussion on par. 1 of the statutes will now clearly see that the error committed by

tions are to be observed in opportunism on the subjects of the program and tactics, scoffing at "orthodoxy," narrowness and immobility—revisionist "criticism" and ministerialism—bourgeois democracy.

In close psychological association with the hatred of discipline is that ceaseless, long-drawn out offended note which is to be detected throughout all the writings of the present-day opportunists in general, and our minority in particular. They complain

Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod when broadened and developed, must inevitably lead to opportunism in organization. The fundamental idea of Comrade Martov—self-inscription in the Party—is the false "democratic" idea of constructing the Party from the bottom upwards. On the other hand, my idea is "bureaucratic" in the sense that the Party should be constructed from the top downwards, from the Party Congress to the individual Party organizations. The psychology of the bourgeois intellectual, anarchist phraseology and opportunist and "khvostist" profundity—all these are to be found in the discussions on par. 1. In "A State of Siege" (p. 20) Comrade Martov speaks of "the beginning intellectual work" of the new "Iskra." That is true to the extent that both he and Axelrod are indeed urging thought in a new direction, beginning with par. 1. The further the "work" in that direction proceeds and the freer work is from wrangling about co-option the deeper will they land themselves in the mire. Comrade Plekhanov saw this very clearly at the Party Congress and in his article "What is Not to be Done?" he again warned them: "I am prepared to co-opt you, but don't go any further along that road, for it will only lead you to opportunism and anarchism." Martov and Axelrod would not listen to good advice. What, not go along that road? Agree with Lenin that co-option is mere wrangling? Never! We will show him that we are men of principle! And they have shown it. They have shown clearly to everybody that to the extent that they have any new principles at all, those principles are principles of opportunism.

of being persecuted, hemmed-in, thrown out, besieged, driven. Indeed, read the protocols of our Party Congress and you will find that the minority consists of all those who at one time or other, and for some reason or other, have been offended by our revolutionary Social Democracy. Here we have the Bundists (24) and the "Rabochie Delo" people, whom we so "offended" that they quit the Congress; we have the "Yuzhni Rabochi" people, who have been mortally offended by the strangling of the organizations in general and by theirs in particular; we have Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod, who were offended by the "false accusations of opportunism" made against them in connection with par. 1 and by their defeat at the elections. And all these mortal offenses were not the result of intolerable jests, or severe attacks, or rabid polemics, banging of doors and shaking of fists—as many philistines still think—but the inevitable political result of the ideas which "Iskra" has now been advocating for three years. If during the course of these three years we had not been idly heating the air, but had been expressing convictions which were to be followed by deeds, we could not do otherwise than fight the anti-Iskrists and the "Marsh" at the Congress. And since we, together with Comrade Martov, who fought with open vizor in the front rank, had offended so many people, it only remained to offend Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov ever so little, just a tiny little, in order to fill the cup to overflowing. Quantity was trans-

formed into quality. There has been a negation of negations. All those who had been offended forgot their mutual difference, flung themselves weeping into each others' arms and raised the banner "of revolt against Leninism." *

Revolt is an excellent thing when it is the revolt of the advanced element against the reactionaries. It is well when the revolutionary wing revolts against the opportunist wing. But when the opportunist wing revolts against the revolutionary wing, it is a bad thing. . . .

* * *

It is better that ten men who work shall not call themselves members of the Party (real workers do not chase after titles) than that one gas-bag should have the right and the opportunity to be a member of the Party.

(1903, from Speech at the Second Congress of the Party).

To regard as a member of the Party an individual who does not belong to any Party organization, means to be opposed to all Party control. In this connection, Martov has introduced a new principle, which absolutely contradicts the principle of "Iskra." Martov's formula has widened the boundaries

* The author of this astonishing expression is Comrade Martov (A "State of Siege," p. 38). Comrade Martov waited until he had procured reinforcements before raising the "revolt" against me. Comrade Martov is a clumsy protagonist: he hopes to annihilate his opponent by paying his great compliments.

of the Party. He argues that our Party must be a Party of the masses, but he has opened wide the door to every opportunist and has stretched the boundaries of the Party to complete difusion.

Under present conditions, this represents a great danger, because it makes it very difficult to draw a line of demarcation between a revolutionary and an idle talker. That is why we must make the conception of the Party narrower. Martov's mistake is that he opened the door widely to every passer-by, when it has been discovered that even one-third of those present at the Congress were merely hangers-on. In this instance, Martov displayed opportunism. His formula introduced a false note into the rules; every member of the Party must be under the control of an organization so that the central committee may have access to every single member of the Party.

My formula created a stimulus to organize.

(1903, from Speech of 11th Congress of the League of Revolutionary Social Democrats abroad).

VI.

OPPORTUNISM IN ORGANIZATION QUESTIONS.

(From "One Step Forward, Two Back").

The proletariat has no other weapon in the fight for power except organization. Disorganized by the domination of anarchic competition in the capitalist world, oppressed by forced labor for the capitalists, constantly forced "to the depths" of utter poverty, ignorance and degeneracy, the proletariat can become and inevitably will become an indomitable force only because its intellectual unity created by the principles of Marxism is fortified by the material unity of organization which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the decrepit rule of Russian autocracy nor the ageing rule of international capitalism will be able to withstand this army. This army will close up its ranks more and more closely in spite of zig-zags and retreats, in spite of the opportunistic phrases of the Girondists of contemporary Social Democracy, in spite of the smug self-satisfaction of obsolete study circleism, and in spite of the brilliance and bustle of intellectual anarchism.

VII.

WHY THE PROLETARIAT MUST TRAIN ITS OWN LEADERS.

Not a single class in history achieved power without putting forward its political leaders and spokesmen, capable of organizing the movement and leading it.

(December, 1900, in "Iskra," No. 1, article entitled: "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement").

"The material elements" of our movement have grown enormously since 1898, but **the conscious leaders** (Social Democrats) **lagged behind this growth.** This is the principal reason for the crisis which Russian Social Democracy is now experiencing. The mass (spontaneous) movement lacks **"ideologists"** sufficiently trained theoretically to be able to withstand all waverings; it lacks leaders with the wide political outlook, revolutionary energy and organizing abilities required to establish a fighting political Party on the basis of the new movement.

(December 6, 1901, "Iskra," No. 12. "A Talk with Advocates of Economism").

The whole Party must systematically and persistently train from among its own ranks suitable people to work in the centre; it must see clearly, as if on the palm of its hand, the whole activity of every candidate for this post; it must become acquainted with their individual characteristics, their weak sides and their strong sides, with their victories and with their "defeats."

(1903, November 25, in a letter to "Iskra").

There is not a single political worker who has not experienced defeat at some period of his career, and if we desire to speak seriously about exercising influence upon the masses, about winning the "good will" of the masses, we must exert every effort to prevent these defeats from being concealed in the vitiated atmosphere of study-circle and groups; they must be submitted to the judgment of all. At first sight it would seem that this is not a proper thing to do and that it would give "offence" to this or that leader. But this false sense of propriety must be overcome; it is our duty to the Party and to the working class. By this and this alone will we make it possible for the whole mass (and not a casually selected group or study-circle) of influential Party workers to know their leaders and to place each one of them in their proper place. Only wide publicity will rectify all the rigid one-sided, capricious deviations. Only this will convert, what are sometimes stupid and ridiculous "oppositions"

and "little groups" into useful and necessary material for Party self-training.

Light, more light! We must have an enormous orchestra; we must acquire experience in order to be able to distribute properly the various roles; to give one a sentimental violin, to another the stern double bass and to a third the conductor's baton. Let us respond to the author's appeal for hospitality for all opinions in the pages of the Party organ and in all Party publications. Let us and everyone judge our "polemics and quarrels" over the question as to whether a "note" was sharp or flat or cracked. Only after a series of such open discussions, will it be possible to train a really harmonious concert of leaders; only if this is done, will the workers be placed in a position in which they cannot fail to understand us; only in this way will our "general staff" be able to rely on the good and conscious will of the army, which simultaneously follows the lead of and directs its general staff.

(1903, November 25. A Letter to "Iskra").

We must train people who shall devote to the revolution not only their spare evenings, but the whole of their lives. We must set up an organization sufficiently large in order to be able to introduce a strict division of labor in the various forms of our work.

(1900, December article in "Iskra," No. 1, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement").

The masses will never learn to carry on the political struggle until we help the leaders of the struggle, both intelligent workers and intellectuals, to train themselves, and these leaders can obtain this training only by the systematic every-day study of all the aspects of our political life, of all the attempts to protest and fight made by the various classes for various reasons.

(1902, "What is to be Done?").

Politics is a science and an art that did not come down from heaven and is not acquired gratis. . . . If the proletariat wishes to defeat the bourgeoisie, it must train from among its ranks its own proletarian "class politicians" who should not be inferior to the bourgeois politicians.

(1920, from "Infantile Sickness of Leftism").

VIII.

ON THE ROAD.

(From the "Social Democrat," No. 2, Feb. 19, 1909).

A year of disintegration lies behind us, a year of confusion in political ideas, for the Party a year of pathless wandering. The Party organizations have been steadily losing in membership, and some of them—those with the least proletarian membership—have altogether fallen to pieces. The semi-open Party institutions have suffered defeat after defeat. Things came to such a pass that certain elements in the Party, surrendering to the influences of decay, began to ask whether it was necessary to preserve the old Social Democratic Party at all, whether its cause was to be continued, whether it was necessary to go underground, and if so, how. And to this the extreme right elements replied by advocating legalization at all costs, even at the price of the direct sacrifice of the Party program, its tactics and organization (the so-called liquidationist movement). The crisis was evidently not merely one of organization, but also one of political ideas.

The recent National Conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party brought the Party on to the road again and was apparently the turning

point in the development of the Russian labor movement since the triumph of the counter-revolution. . . .

The fundamental cause of the crisis in the Party is set forth in the introduction to the resolution on organization. The cause was that the Party was being cleansed of wavering intellectual and petty-bourgeois elements, who, as a rule, had joined the labor movement in the hope of the early triumph of the bourgeois democratic revolution, and who were too weak to withstand the period of reaction. Their weakness betrayed itself in the realm of theory ("departure from revolutionary Marxism": the resolution on Current Affairs), the realm of tactics ("the cutting down of slogans") and in the realm of Party organizational policy. The class-conscious workers resisted this vacillation; they energetically attacked the liquidators, and began to take the conduct and control of affairs of the Party into their own hands. If this firm kernel in our Party was unable immediately to gain the mastery over the elements of disintegration who caused the crisis, it was not only because the task was too great and difficult to be accomplished amidst the triumph of counter-revolution, but also because of a certain indifference towards the Party on the part of workers who were revolutionary in spirit, but who did not possess a sufficient degree of Socialist consciousness. It is in fact to the class-conscious workers of Russia that the decisions

of the conference, setting forth the views of the Social Democrats regarding the methods of struggle to be employed during the period of disintegration and vacillation, are primarily addressed. . . .

The question of the attitude to be maintained towards the fraction in the Duma has both a tactical and an organizational side. As regards the latter, the resolution on the Duma fraction is but the application to a particular case of the general principles of organizational policy as set forth by the conference in the resolution on principles of organization. In this connection the existence of two main tendencies in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party were recorded by the Conference: one which places the main emphasis on illegal Party organization, and the other—more or less akin to liquidationism—which places the main emphasis on legal and semi-legal organization. The feature of the present moment, as we have already pointed out, is the exodus from the Party of a certain number of active Party workers, intellectuals as a rule, but some workers also. The existence of a liquidationist tendency gives rise to the question, is it the best and most active elements, or the "vacillating intellectual and petty-bourgeois elements who are quitting the Party and choosing the legal organizations for their sphere of activity? It need hardly be said that the Conference, having firmly rejected and condemned liquidationism, replied in the latter sense. The most proletarian elements in the Party, the elements who are most strongly

grounded in principle, and the most Social Democratic intellectual elements have remained true to the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. The exodus from the Party is a cleansing of the Party, the departure of its least stable and least reliable friends, the "hangers-on" (Mitläufer), who associated themselves temporarily with the proletariat and who were recruited from the petty bourgeoisie or from the "de-classed," i. e. from the people who have been forced out of some definite class sphere.

This view of the principles of Party organization naturally leads to the line of organizational policy which was adopted by the Conference. The consolidation of the illegal Party organizations, the creation of Party nuclei in every sphere of action, the formation above all of "purely Party, even if numerically small, workers' committees in every industrial concern," the concentration of the control of functions in the hands of leaders of the Social Democratic movement who have originated from the workers themselves—such are the tasks of the moment. It is the duty, of course, of these nuclei and committees to make use of the semi-legal organizations and wherever possible too, of the legal organizations, in order to maintain "close contact with the masses," and in order so to conduct the work that the Social Democrats will react to every demand made by the masses. Every nucleus and every Party workers' committee must be "a base supporting the agitational, propaganda and organizing work among the masses," i. e. they must

go wherever the masses are going and at every step endeavor to direct their consciousness towards Socialism, they must associate every private question with the general tasks of the proletariat, they must use every attempt at organization to further the cause of class consolidation, and by their energy and moral influence (and not, of course, by their titles and ranks) gain the lead in every legal proletarian organization. That these nuclei and committees will be sometimes rather small numerically is of no consequence—they will be bound together by the ties of Party tradition, Party organization and a definite class program. Two or three Social Democratic Party members will therefore be able to prevent themselves from dissolving into a vague and formless legal organization. Under all conditions and circumstances, and in every possible situation, they will carry on a Party policy, they will influence their environment in the spirit of the Party and will not allow their environment to engulf them. . . .

IX.

THE LIQUIDATION OF LIQUIDATIONISM.

(From the "Proletarii," No. 46, July, 1909).

. . . The last two years, roughly from the coup d'etat of June 3, 1907, to the present moment, represent a period of sharp and abrupt changes of severe crisis in the development of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. The National Conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party held in December, 1908, reviewed the present political situation, the condition and prospects of the revolutionary movement and the tasks of the Party of the working class in the present period. The resolutions passed by the Conference will be a permanent possession for the Party. The Menshevik opportunists insisted on criticising them at all costs, but only thereby painfully revealed the impotence of their "criticism" and their inability to advance an intelligent, integral and systematic solution of the problems dealt with in the resolutions.

But that was not all. The Conference played an important part in the life of our Party by pointing to the existence of new intellectual groupings in both fractions—the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. . . .

These new intellectual groupings may be briefly described as the appearance of Liquidationism on both the extreme flanks of the Party and the fight being waged against it. Liquidationism fully revealed itself among the Mensheviks in December, 1908, but at that time the fight against it was conducted almost exclusively by other fractions (the Bolsheviks and the Polish and Latvian Social Democratic sections of the Bundists). Menshevik Party members, Mensheviks who were opposed to Liquidationism, hardly made themselves felt at that time and did not act in a consolidated and open manner. Among the Bolsheviks both sections were clearly defined and acted openly, namely, the overwhelming majority of orthodox Bolsheviks who were firmly opposed to "Otzovism" (25) and carried out all the resolutions of the conference in their true spirit, and the "Otzovists" minority, who advocated their views as a separate group and received frequent support from the "Ultimatists" (26), who vacillated between them and the orthodox Bolsheviks. That the "Otzovists" (and the Ultimatists, as far as they are associated with them) are Mensheviks turned inside out and Liquidators of a new type has been repeatedly asserted and proven in the "Proletarii" (see especially Nos. 39, 42, and 44). And so we found that among the Mensheviks the overwhelming majority were Liquidators and that the protest and struggle of the Party men against them was only just beginning; while among the Bolsheviks we found that the orthodox elements predominated

but that the "Otzovist" minority were acting openly. Such was the situation within the Party at the time of the December National Conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.

What is Liquidationism? How is it brought about? Why are the "Otzovists" ["Godmakers" (27)] Liquidators and Mensheviks turned inside out? In a word, what is the social meaning and the social significance of the new grouping of ideas within our Party?

Liquidationism in the narrow sense of the word, the Liquidationism of the Mensheviks, regarded intellectually, is the denial of the revolutionary class struggle of the Socialist proletariat in general, and in particular the denial of the hegemony of the proletariat in our bourgeois democratic revolution. The denial of course takes various forms, but it is made consciously, definitely and consistently. . . .

Regarded organizationally, Liquidationism means the denial of the necessity for an illegal Social Democratic Party and the consequent rejection of, and exodus from, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, it is a fight against the Party carried on in the pages of the legal press, in legal workers' organizations, in the trade unions and at congresses where working class delegates are present. The history of any Party organization in Russia during the last two years teems with examples of Menshevik Liquidationism.

X.

A FUNDAMENTAL REASON FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE BOLSHEVIKS.

(From the "Infantile Sickness of Leftism," written 1920).

Nearly everybody perhaps now realizes that the Bolsheviks could not have remained in power for two-and-a-half months, let alone two-and-a-half years, were it not for the strict, in fact, the iron discipline which prevails in our Party, and the full and unquestioning support given it by the whole mass of the working class, that is, by all in it who think, are honest, self-sacrificing, enjoy influence and are able to lead or drag the other sections with them.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a merciless and decisive war waged by the new class against its more powerful enemy, the bourgeoisie, the resistance of which increases tenfold after its overthrow (even though the overthrow takes place in one country only), and the power of which consists not only in the strength of international capitalism and the efficiency of the international communications of the bourgeoisie, but also in force of habit and the strength of petty industry. For, unfortunately, there are very, very many petty industries

still left on this earth; and petty industry daily, hourly, spontaneously and in mass proportion gives birth to capitalism and creates bourgeois stability. That is why the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential; that is why victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long obstinate and desparate war for life or death—a war demanding steadfastness, discipline, firmness and singleness of will.

I repeat that the experience of the triumphant dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly demonstrated to all who are unable to think, or to whom it has not occurred to think, on this subject that unconditional centralization and strict discipline on the part of the proletariat compromise one of the fundamental conditions of victory over the bourgeoisie.

This fact is often spoken about, but far too little consideration is given to what its implications are and under what conditions it becomes possible. Would it not be a good thing if the greetings which are addressed to the Soviet Government and to the Bolsheviks were a little more frequently accompanied by a serious analysis of the causes why the Bolsheviks were able to create the discipline which is so necessary to the revolutionary proletariat?

As a tendency in political thought and as the policy of a political Party, Bolshevism has existed since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the whole period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able under the most difficult

conditions to establish and maintain the iron discipline the victory of the proletariat demands.

The question arises first of all, how is the discipline of the revolutionary Party of the proletariat maintained? How is it being tested? How is it being strengthened? Firstly, by the consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and its devotion to the revolution, its steadfastness, its self-sacrifice and its heroism. Secondly, by its ability to maintain contact and to obtain approach, to fuse itself, if you like, with the wide mass of the toilers,—firstly and foremost with the proletarian toiling masses, but also with the non-proletarian toiling masses. Thirdly, by the correct political leadership exercised by the vanguard and its correct political strategy and tactics, which are conducted in such a way that the wide masses are able to convince themselves of their correctness by their own experience. Without these conditions, discipline cannot be maintained in a revolutionary Party really capable of being the Party of the class which is destined to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transforms the whole of society. Without these conditions, discipline must inevitably be an empty-sounding phrase, a crooked gesture. But such conditions cannot be created immediately. They are the result of long effort and painful experience; their creation is facilitated by a correct revolutionary theory, a theory which is not a dogma, but which has been built up by close association with the experience of a real mass, revolutionary movement.

If during the years 1917 to 1920 Bolshevism was able under unprecedently difficult conditions to create and successfully maintain strict centralization and iron discipline, the reasons are to be sought in a number of historical factors peculiar to Russia.

Bolshevism sprang up in 1903 on the firm rock of Marxian theory. The justness of that theory—and of that theory alone—was demonstrated by the world's experience during the nineteenth century, and in particular by the aberrations and vacillations, the errors and disillusions of revolutionary thought in Russia. During a period of nearly half a century, roughly from the 'forties to the 'nineties—advanced thought in Russia, suffering under the unprecedented savage and reactionary yoke of Czarism, eagerly sought for a correct revolutionary theory, and with amazing concentration and zeal followed every "last word" that was uttered on this subject in Europe and America. Russia gained the knowledge that Marxism was the only true revolutionary theory by the suffering of half a century of intolerable torment and sacrifice, by unexampled revolutionary heroism, by unbelievable energy and constant search, by education, practical experience, disillusionment, experiment, and by studying the experience of Europe. Thanks to the emigration which Czarism made necessary, revolutionary Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century acquired a wealth of international connections and an acquaintance with the forms and theories of the

revolutionary movement of the world, such as no other country possessed.

Moreover, Bolsheviks, having grown up on this granite theoretical basis, passed through fifteen years of practical history (1903-1917), which for richness of experience has no equal in the world. For no country during these fifteen years has undergone nearly as much in the way of revolutionary experience, or has witnessed such rapid and varied changes in the forms of the movement—legal and illegal, peaceful and violent, underground and above-ground, closed circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terroristic. In no country in the world has there been concentrated in so brief a period such a wealth of forms, shades and methods of struggle on the part of all classes of modern society, a struggle, which, owing to the backwardness of the country and the heavy yoke of Czarism, developed with peculiar rapidity, and which mastered with particular eagerness and success the "last word" in the political experience of America and Europe. . . .

XI.

RESOLUTION OF THE TENTH CONGRESS OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY ON PARTY UNITY (1921) *

1. The Congress draws the attention of all members of the Party to the fact that the unity and compactness of its ranks, the maintenance of complete confidence among Party members and unity of action and a real embodiment of the unity of the will of the vanguard of the proletariat are specially necessary at the present moment when a series of circumstances tend to intensify vacillation among the petty bourgeois population of the country.

2. Already prior to the general Party discussion on the question of trade unions there had been observed certain evidences of fractionalism, i. e. the rise of groups within the Party, having their own platform and aiming at exclusiveness and the establishment of their own group discipline.

It is necessary that all class-conscious workers clearly recognize the harm and the impossibility of allowing any kind of fractionism, which must inevi-

* Drafted by Bukharin in close collaboration with Comrade Lenin.

tably lead to the weakening of the harmonious work in the Party and encourage the repetition of attempts of those enemies who have masqueraded as Communists and entered the Party to increase the differences and use them for the purposes of counter-revolution.

The manner in which the enemies of the proletariat make use of any deviation from the strict and consistent Communist line of action was made strikingly clear by the Kronstadt mutiny when the bourgeois counter-revolution and the White Guards of all countries expressed their willingness to accept the watchword of the Soviet system if only to overthrow the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in Russia, when the Socialist Revolutionaries and the bourgeois counter-revolution in general employed in Kronstadt the watchwords of revolt, pretending to do so in the name of the Soviets against the Soviet Government in Russia. These facts suffice to show that the White Guards strive and are able to don the garb of Communists and even of "left Communists" in order to weaken and overthrow the bulwark of the proletarian Revolution in Russia. The Menshevist leaflets distributed in Petrograd on the eve of the Kronstadt mutiny show also that the Mensheviks make use of the differences within the R. C. P. in order to give an impetus to and support the Kronstadt mutiny. At the same time Socialist Revolutionaries and White Guards declared themselves in words against the mutiny and in favor of

the Soviet Power, with, however, slight modifications.

3. Propaganda on this question must consist on the one hand of the explanation of the harm and the danger of fractionism from the standpoint of Party Unity and the realization of unity of the will by the vanguard of the proletariat as a fundamental condition for the success of the proletarian dictatorship, and on the other hand, in explaining the peculiarities of the new tactics and methods of the enemies of the Soviet Power. These enemies, convinced of the hopelessness of the counter-revolution openly conducted under the banner of the counter revolution are now exerting all efforts in order to make use of the differences within the R. C. P. and to advance the counter-revolution by transferring power to the political groups which outwardly stand closer to the recognition of the Soviet Power.

Propaganda must also explain the experiences of previous revolutions, when counter revolution supported the petty bourgeois groups nearest to the extreme revolutionary parties in order to shake and overthrow the revolutionary dictatorship and in this way to open the road for the further complete victory of the counter revolution of capitalists and landlords.

4. It is necessary that every Party organization pay strict attention to the undoubtedly necessary criticism of the failings of the Party, to the analysis of the general policy of the Party, the summarizing

of its practical experience, the control of the execution of the decisions of the Party and the rectification of any errors, etc., being conducted not by discussions in groups organizing themselves on some "platform," etc., but by discussions among the entire membership of the Party. For this purpose the Congress prescribes the publication of a regular "Discussion Sheet" and special selections. Every member expressing criticism must take into consideration the position of the Party surrounded by enemies and must also by direct participation in Soviet and Party work, strive to rectify the errors of the Party by actual deeds.

5. While instructing the Central Committee to carry out the complete abolition of all fractionism, the Congress at the same time declares that all proposals with regard to questions particularly attracting the attention of the members of the Party such as purging the Party of non-proletarian and unreliable elements, combating bureaucracy, the development of democracy and initiative of the workers, etc., must be examined with the closest attention and tested in practical work. All members of the Party must know that the Party does not carry out all the necessary measures with regard to these questions because of various obstacles, and that while resolutely refuting all unbusinesslike and fractional criticism, the Party will unceasingly continue, by testing new methods, to combat bureaucracy, to extend democracy and initiative, to expose and expel from the Party all

those who are merely masquerading as Communists, etc.

5. The Congress prescribes the immediate dispersion of all groups without exception adhering to one or another platform and instructs all Party organizations to prevent any fractional action. The failure to carry out this instruction of the congress must be followed by unconditional and immediate expulsion from the Party.

XII.

THE PARTY CLEANSING.

(From "Pravda," No. 210, September 21, 1921).

The Party cleansing has apparently developed into a serious and extremely important piece of work.

In certain localities those who are undertaking the cleansing of the Party are relying mainly on the experience and the advice of non-Party workers, guiding themselves by that advice and consulting the representatives of the non-Party proletarian masses. That is very valuable, and important fact. If we really succeed in cleansing the Party from top to bottom in this fashion, "without respect for persons," the conquest of the revolution will indeed be great.

For the conquests of the revolution cannot now change in character with the transition from the military front to the economic front, with the transition to the new economic policy and to conditions which demand first and foremost increased productivity of labor and of greater labor discipline. At such a time the main conquests of the revolution are internal improvements, which in themselves are not striking and not immediately apparent: improvement of the conditions and the product of

labor and improvements in the sense of combatting the influence of the petty bourgeois and petty bourgeois anarchist instincts which are so destructive both to the proletariat and to the Party. In order to effect this improvement, we must cleanse the Party of elements who have alienated themselves from the masses (not to speak, of course, of elements who are disgracing the Party in the eyes of the masses). We shall not, of course, always submit to the advice of the masses, for the state of mind of the masses—especially at times of exceptional fatigue and exhaustion due to excessive hardships and sufferings—is not always of the most advanced order. But as far as concerns a negative estimate of those who have "adhered" themselves to the Party, who have become "commissarized" and "bureaucratized," the advice of the non-Party proletarian masses, and often the non-Party peasant masses, is extremely valuable. The toiling masses have an extremely acute flair for the difference between honest and sincere Communists and such as arouse disgust in people who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, who have no privileges and "no pull with the authorities."

It is a great thing in cleansing the Party to pay heed to the advice of the non-Party toilers. It will be productive of valuable results. It will make the Party a still stronger vanguard of the class than formerly, it will make it a vanguard which will be more closely connected with the class and more

capable of leading it to victory amid great difficulties and dangers.

One partial function of the Party cleansing, I should say, is to purge it of former Mensheviks*. In my opinion, of the Mensheviks who joined the Party since the beginning of 1918 only about one-hundredth part should be allowed to remain and even these should be tested three or four times over. Why? Because during the period 1918-1921 the Mensheviks as a class revealed two peculiarities: one, a capacity for adapting themselves, for "adhering" themselves to the prevailing movement among the workers; secondly, a still greater capacity for faithfully serving the White Guards, serving them in deed while renouncing them in word. Both these capacities follow naturally from the whole history of Menshevism. We have only to recall Axelrod's "Labor Congress," the relations of the Mensheviks to the Cadets (and to the monarchy) in word and in deed, etc., etc. The Mensheviks "adhere" themselves to the Russian Communist Party not merely and not even primarily from Macchiavilism (although as far as the methods of bourgeois diplomacy are concerned, the Mensheviks since 1903 have shown that they are past masters in that art), but because of their "pliability." An opportunist is distinguished by his pliability (although pliability is not always opportunism), and the Mensheviks, being opportunists, adapt themselves, so to speak,

* Comrade Lenin, is here, of course, referring mainly to former Menshevik intellectuals.—Editor.

"on principle" to the prevailing movement among the workers; they adopt a protective coloring, as the hare turns white in winter. We must recognize this peculiarity of the Mensheviks and know how to reckon with it. And in order to reckon with it we must cleanse the Party of about ninety-nine-hundredths of the Mensheviks who have joined the Party since 1918, i. e. when the victory of the Bolsheviks began to appear at first probable, and then certain.

We must cleanse the Party of criminal elements, of those who have become bureaucratized, of dishonest persons, of unreliable Communists and of Mensheviks who have re-painted their "facade," but in their hearts have remained Mensheviks.

XIII.

"A LETTER TO A GERMAN COMRADE."

(Extract—Written August 14, 1921.)

. . . The resolutions on tactics and organization adopted at the Third Congress of the Communist International marks in my opinion, a great step forward by the movement. Every effort must be made to carry these two resolutions into effect. It is difficult, but it can be done, and must be done.

Communists had first to declare their principles to the world. That was done at the First Congress. That was the first step.

The second step was to give the Communist International organizational form and to work out the conditions for adoption into the International—which were in fact the conditions for isolating ourselves from the centrists and the direct and indirect agents of the bourgeoisie within the labor movement. That was effected at the Second Congress.

At the Third Congress we had to begin real positive work, and, in view of the practical experience already gained in the struggle by the Communists, to define concretely, **how exactly** the work was to be carried on, from the point of view both of tactics and organization. This third step was also made.

We have an army of Communists in every part of the world. It is still badly instructed and still badly organized. Forgetfulness of this fact, or fear of admitting it, has done great harm to the cause. We must instruct this army in a businesslike fashion, as it should be instructed, and organize as it should be organized. Meanwhile we must test ourselves with the greatest caution and care and learn from the experience of our own movement; we must exercise it in every kind of maneuver, in every kind of warfare and in attacking and retiring movements. Without this long and difficult training victory will be impossible. . . .

XIV.

LENIN'S BEHEST TO THE SECTIONS OF COMINTERN ON THE QUESTION OF ORGANIZATION.

(From his speech on the Organizational Structure of the Communist Parties, delivered to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern.

. . . At the Third Congress in 1921 we adopted a resolution on the organizational structure of the Comunist Parties and on the methods and nature of their work. The resolution is an excellent one, but it is Russian from beginning to end, i. e. it is based entirely on Russian conditions. This has its advantages, but it also has its disadvantages. The disadvantages are, as I am convinced, that not a single foreigner can read it—I went through the resolution again before making this statement. Firstly, it is too long: it contains fifty or more paragraphs. Foreigners as a rule do not read such things. Secondly, even if they do read it, they will not understand it, because it is too Russian. Not because it is written in Russian—it has been excellently translated into every language—but it is impregnatized with the Russian spirit. And thirdly, if by chance a foreigner does understand it, he will not be able to carry it out. I have spoken with some of the delegates who have come here and I hope during the course of the Congress to speak with

many of them at greater length. I got the impression that in this resolution we have made a great mistake, that we have ourselves cut off the path to further progress. As I said, the resolution is an excellent one: I would put my name to all of its 55 or more paragraphs. But we have not understood how to bring our Russian experience to the foreigner. Everything said in that resolution has remained a dead letter. If we do not grasp this we shall not get any further.

I think that the most important thing for us all, both Russian comrades and foreign comrades, after five years of the Russian revolution is to learn. We have only just obtained the opportunity of learning. I do not know how long this opportunity will last, I do not know how long the capitalist powers will allow us the opportunity of learning. But every moment we have free from military activities, from war, we must devote to study.

The whole Party and every section of the population of Russia is showing great enthusiasm for study. That enthusiasm shows that the great task for us also now is to study.

Our foreign comrades must also study. Of course, not in the same way as we study,—reading, writting, and the understanding of what we have read, which for us is so necessary. There is a conflict of opinions as to whether this belongs to proletarian or bourgeois culture. I know nothing about that, but in any case I will say that we must learn to read, to write and understand what we have read.

Foreigners do not need that. They require something higher, including first of all to understand what we wrote about the organizational structure of the Communist Parties, to which the foreign comrades set their signature, without reading and without understanding. That should be their first task. This resolution is too Russian: it reflects Russian experience, and for that reason is entirely incomprehensible to foreigners. They cannot rest content with hanging it up in a corner like an ikon and praying to it. That will lead us nowhere. They must understand a part of the Russian experience. How that is to be done, I do not know. It is possible, for example, that the fascisti in Italy are doing us a great service by showing the Italians that they are still not sufficiently enlightened and that their country is still not guaranteed against the Black Hundreds. That may be very useful. We Russians must also attempt to explain to foreigners the fundamentals of the resolution. Otherwise they will not be able to put the resolution into effect. I am convinced that in this respect we must tell both the Russian and the foreign comrades that the most important thing in the coming period is to study. We are learning in a general sense. You must learn in a special sense, in order to achieve the organization, the structure, the method and content of revolutionary work. If that is achieved I am convinced that the prospects for the world revolution will be not only good—they will be excellent.

NOTES.

1 (p. 9), the **Economists.** See foreword.

2 (p. 11), **Krichevsky** and **Martynov** were the leaders of the "Economists" and the editors of the organ of the "League of Russian Social Democrats," the "Rabochie Delo" (The Workers Cause), which gave expression to the opportunist tendencies within the ranks of the Russian Social Democrats. (In all, there appeared twelve numbers, from April, 1899, to March, 1902). The "Rabochie Delo" asserted that 1) the propaganda of the "Economists" and the "politicians" were two different but essential phases of one and the same process, and 2) the most important thing was the elemental movement of the working class masses. After the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, Martynov joined the Menshevik fraction and later became one of its most prominent leaders. During the war he was an "Internationalist." In 1922 he joined the Russian Communist Party.

3 (p. 12), **The St. Petersburg Fighting Union for the Emancipation of the Working Class** was formed in 1894 from a circle of Social Democratic propagandists. Lenin, Martov and Krizhizhanovsky were in their time members. On December 9, 1895, the Union was broken up by the police and its most prominent leaders arrested. As a result the revolutionary activity of the Union came to an end in 1897. There then followed the heyday of Economism and the tactics of "petty business" overshadowed the main aim—the emancipation of the working class. In 1897 the Petersburg Fighting Union began the publication of the Social Democratic paper, the "Rabochaya Mysl" (The Workers' Idea) which announced that its aims were "to fight for the improvement of the economic

situation and against capitalism on the basis of the most urgent day-to-day interests, and to use the strikes as a means of conducting the fight"; it renounced the political struggle and a centralized political Party and placed exclusive emphasis on the elemental and spontaneous factor in the working class movement. The "Iskra" (The Spark), headed by Lenin, which advocated and defended the full and uncurtailed aims and tactics of revolutionary Social Democracy, carried on a bitter struggle against the "Rabochaya Mysl" and the "Rabochie Delo."

4 (p. 13), **Zubatov,** Chief of the Moscow Section of the Okhrana (the political police) endeavored to direct the growing proletarian movement along lines acceptable to Czarism. In Moscow in 1902 was formed under his auspices "The Workers' Mutual Aid Society of the Mechanical Trades." This society was conducted by workers who were at the same time agents of the Okhrana. In order to gain the sympathy of the workers the society even went to the extent of organizing certain strikes, thereby consciously assisting in deepening the class hatred of the workers against the bourgeoisie. **Czerov** and **Worms** were two professors of the University of Moscow who supported the tactics of Zubatov. The Zubatovists however met with no great success; the workers very soon discovered their true character and avoided them.

5 (p. 14), **Struvism** is associated with the name of Peter Struve who in the 'nineties was a "Legal Marxist" and took part in the First Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1898. At the beginning of the twentieth century he became a leader of the liberal bourgeoisie and ended as a rabid counter-revolutionary and monarchist.

6 (p. 18), **"Svoboda"** (Freedom) was the organ of the rather muddle-headed writer Nadezhin (Selelnski) published between 1901 and 1903. It has left no particular trace in the history of the Russian Social Democratic movement.

7 (p. 19), **"Rabochaya Mysl,"** the most rabid organ of the Economists (1897-1902).

8 (p. 27), **B-v** was the pseudonym of B. V. Savinkov who was then a Social Democrat and a member of the Petersburg Fighting Union. While in exile Savinkov turned Narodnik (Populist) and joined the Socialist Revolutionaries. In 1905 he joined the "Fighting Organization" formed by the provocateur Azev. Practically every prominent terrorist act of the Socialist Revolutionaries in recent times was inspired by Savinkov. During the war he was a rabid patriot; in 1917 he became the right hand of Kerensky, and after the October Revolution an active counter-revolutionary in the pay of the French capitalists.

9 (p. 30), **"Credo,"** the statement of fate of the Economists.

10 (p. 34), **Zemlevoltzi.** "Zemlia i Volia" (Land and Freedom) was an organization formed in 1876 by certain non-political rebels belonging to the Narodniki (Populists) who believed that Socialism could be brought about through the instrumentality of the peasant village communes. In 1897 "Zemlia i Volia" split up into the "Narodovoltzi" and "Chernyperedeltzi." The group "Chernyi Peredel" (General Division of Land) which did not remain in existence very long (it was from this group that the first Russian Marxists preceded—Plekhanov, Zasulitch and others, who in 1883 formed the first Social Democratic organization, "The Group for the Emancipation of Labor") fought for the maintenance of the old tactics. The group "Narodnaya Volia" (Popular Freedom) advocated the use of terrorism in the fight against the autocracy and its agents. It was at the orders of the Executive Committee of the "Narodnaya Volia" that Czar Alexander II was assassinated on March 1, 1881. In the 'eighties, the Czarist government with the aid of spies and provocateurs put an end to the "Narodovoltzi" as an active fighting revolutionary organization.

11 (p. 37), **Vera Zasulitch** was formerly a member of the group "Zemlia i Volia," then a member of the Marxian "Group for the Emancipation of Labor" which was formed

in 1883, and a member of the editorial board of "Iskra." She then became a Menshevik, and during the war was a rabid patriot and opponent of the Bolsheviks.

12 (p. 37), **"Zarya"** (The Dawn), a popular scientific Marxian journal was published in 1901 to 1902 under the editorship of Plekhanov, Vera Zasulitch and P. Axelrod with the collaboration of the contributors to the old "Iskra." A number of articles from the pen of Lenin appeared in "Zarya."

13 (p. 40), **"Nakanune"** (On the Eve) was a Socialist Revolutionary journal published by Serebyakov in London.

14 (p. 40), **Plekhanov** and the "Plekhanovists" were at that time revolutionary Marxists. After the split of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Plekhanov was at first on the side of the Bolsheviks, but he went over to the Mensheviks. During the imperialist war he was a patriot. He died in 1918.

15 (p. 41), **Myshkin** was a prominent figure in the "Trial of the 193" (Zemlevoltzi) in 1877-8. **Zhelyabov** was a prominent Narodovoletz and, with **Rogatchev** and **Perovskaya**, the chief organizer of the assassination of Alexander II; all three were executed. **Vera Figner** was also a prominent member of the group "Narodnaya Volia" and was imprisoned for 20 years in the Schlüsselburg Fortress.

16 (p. 45), **C. O.**, the Central Organ (at that time "Iskra").

17 (p. 47), **the Russian Social Democratic Party** (R. S. D. L. P.) was founded at the First Party Congress in 1898.

18 (p. 51), **"The Foreign League of Russian Revolutionary Social Democrats"** was founded by the "Iskrists" at the beginning of the twentieth century as a counterbalance to the opportunist "Foreign Union of Russian Social Democrats." After the Party split at the second congress a bitter struggle began within the League also, in which the Mensheviks finally gained the majority.

19 (p. 63), **Nadezhdin.** See note 6.

20 (p. 65), **The New "Iskra,"** i. e. the Menshevik "Iskra" which fell into the hands of the Mensheviks after the Second Congress.

21 (p. 65), **Peter Alekseev** was a weaver. During the 'seventies he was a strong revolutionary and was prominent in the "Trial of the Fifty" (1877). He made a brilliant speech to the court, was sentenced to twenty years hard labor and died in Siberia. **Khalturin** was a worker, a Narodovoletz, and organizer of the "Northern Union of Russian Workers." He was executed in 1880 for complicity in an explosion in the Czar's palace. **Myshkin** and **Zhelyabov,** see note 15.

22 (p. 71), **Liber** (Baer), M. I. Goldman, was a prominent member of the Jewish Bund and member of its Central Committee. He later became a Menshevik Liquidationist. He was a patriot during the imperialist war, an advocate of coalition with the bourgeoisie during the revolution, and an enemy of the Soviet Government.

23 (p. 84), **"Forward slowly, zig-zag fashion!"** A rhymed satire on the Economists (their "Marseillaise") written by Martov, who after the Second Party Congress became the leader of the Mensheviks.

24 (p. 101), the **Bundists.** The bund, the Jewish General Labor Union, was formed in 1897 and at the First Russian Social Democratic Congress in 1898 joined the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. It however withdrew at the Second Congress which rejected the federative principle of Party structure. At the Fourth Congress it once more joined the R. S. D. L. P. and supported the Liquidationists. During the war the majority of the Bundists were patriots and social-pacifists (Liber and Abramovitch). During the civil war the Bund became revolutionarized and in 1921, under the pressure of the proletarian masses, joined the Russian Communist Party.

25 (p. 111), the **"Otzovists."** See Introduction, p. 14.

26 (p. 111), the **"Ultimatists."** See Introduction, p. 14.

27 (p. 112), the **"Godmakers."** See Introduction, p. 14.